

**Health in the Winds: Wind Band Participation as a Health Promoting Activity for Older
Men**

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ABSTRACT

Using a basic interpretive qualitative research design, this study explores adult musicians' reflections of participation in wind band as a health promoting activity. Five male participants between the ages of 58 and 76 participated in semi-structured interviews and provided basic demographic information. Data were analyzed thematically and findings represented evocatively. Elements of a wind ensemble were used as a metaphor to provide a rich way of presenting the data as fundamentally tied to the specific act of making music in a wind ensemble. The three main components of the metaphor and the main themes they present are: Instrumentation: Defining Roles (Purpose), Sound: Making Meaning (Physical and Emotional Well-being), and Performance: Extending Self (Challenge, Accomplishment and Connection). The current findings contribute to furthering knowledge and research in the area of music making and health, especially wind ensemble playing participation and healthy aging. Implications for both practice and future research are identified.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In my life as a student, musician and teacher there are moments I can recall with great clarity. A moment where something “clicks” and pieces fall together, interlocking and combining to create something greater. A moments that morphs into a new, highly fused form that becomes part of the foundation of my being, part of the fuel that energizes my questioning and learning and gives direction to my development as a professional and a person. Such a moment occurred one year at an annual gathering of teachers.

Sitting in a crowd of several thousand teachers at the convention the keynote speaker began his address by asking the question, “What do teachers wish for their students?” While I can no longer remember the name of the speaker, I do remember his response. After having asked the question to countless teachers, he reported that teachers, with remarkable consistency, answer that they want their students to be happy.

After eagerly anticipating this gem of knowledge, this key to meaning as a teacher, I heard his conclusion and was left profoundly dissatisfied. This conclusion did not fit my idea of purpose through teaching and I was prompted to do some deep reflection. What did I wish for the students I have the honour of working with? Was it the same for every student? Would it change with the subject I was teaching them? While I do not begrudge any of them their happiness, the very intangibility of happiness itself was not enough to meaningfully answer the question.

Life in its richness is full of struggles, challenges, opportunities, and barriers. I wish for students to meet life head on, to be prepared with the tools to handle its challenges, to push through barriers, and to struggle and grow. This is where I find purpose in teaching and the “why” for the significant amount of “what” that a teaching profession entails. This gives meaning and focus to teaching in a way that is valid and useful for every person in the

classroom. What is my greatest wish for students? Health and well-being; a shield with which to do battle with life's challenges at their fullest and most real; a source of balance and strength to draw upon in both good times and bad; and a mantle to be worn throughout a person's lifespan.

What preparation to meet life can I provide for the students I encounter? What tool can I provide to increase health and well-being over a person's lifespan? It was at this moment that it struck me. The tool I use and the tool I can help people connect with, learn to use, and put in their own personal toolbox for life is the experience of playing in a wind ensemble. As a music educator I have always believed that the skills and experiences we create in a band class are lifelong. Now, as a researcher in psychology, I wondered if those skills and experiences were lifelong? Had we asked ensemble players further along the life journey if playing in a wind band was beneficial to them and in what way?

Over the past two years I had the opportunity to be a research assistant for my supervisor, Dr. Jennifer Nicol, who conducted research as part of a large project on health and participation in singing. When transcribing those interviews I realized that many of the choir members' experiences of singing as a health promoting activity resonated with my own experiences both making music as a wind player and making music with wind ensembles from the perspective of the podium.

The inspiration for this study comes from my desire to explore the experiences of wind ensemble players who are well into their life course journey and to hear their perceptions of health and well-being through these experiences.

Background to the Present Study

In 2011 a major demographic event began: the Canadian population saw a generation wave crest as the first of the Baby Boomers - people born between 1946 and 1965 - reached the

age of 65. By 2031 the last of the Baby Boomers will have reached age 65 and seniors will represent 23% of the Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2012). This will be the largest cohort of seniors in Canadian history (Butler-Jones, 2010).

The reality of today's world has changed what being a senior in Canada means. Public health improvements and social investments in old age security means increased longevity and a healthier, older aging population that is growing in numbers (Butler-Jones, 2010). Shifting cultural landscapes bring more people from rural to urban settings for greater employment and educational opportunities, moving families away from their elders (Butler-Jones, 2010). This has led to the development of numerous programs to facilitate independent living for older adults in Canada as well as a concern about increasing isolation and disconnectedness among seniors. Indeed, social connectedness is identified as a key area that can impact healthy aging (Butler-Jones, 2010).

Butler-Jones' (2010) report on healthy aging in Canada challenges researchers to build on existing initiatives and strategies that impact the health of seniors and that could impact the health of all Canadians earlier in their life course, thereby impacting the health of seniors in the future. Two areas for action identified in the report as creating the conditions for healthy aging are: improving data and increasing knowledge of seniors' health and building and sustaining healthy and supportive environments.

There is a growing multi-disciplinary body of literature on singing as a health promoting activity with psychosocial and physiological benefits (Clift, Nicol, Raisbeck, Whitmore & Morrison, 2010; Gick, 2011; Livesey, Morrison, Clift & Camic, 2012). Community music therapy and community music are two fields that focus more broadly on the benefits of music making in groups (Creech, Hallam, McQueen & Varvarigou, 2013; Creech, Hallam, Varvarigou,

McQueen & Gaunt, 2013,). Yet despite the group music making that occurs in a wind band there is limited research on its health benefits for older adults. While Coffman (2002, 2007, 2008) and Dabback (2008, 2010) explored the characteristics of older adults in the United States, Canada, and Ireland who participate in bands, orchestras, and choirs through the New Horizons International Music Association ensembles, there is a paucity of literature exploring the experiences of the older wind musicians themselves.

Summary. The World Health Organization (WHO; 2002) stated that the fastest growing age group globally is people over 60 years of age. More than ever before in history, a healthier, older population is living past the age of 60 and a life course perspective suggests that earlier life experiences are a major influence on the way people age (WHO, 2002; Butler-Jones, 2010). In Canada, Chief Public Health Officer Dr. David Butler-Jones (2010) has challenged researchers to build on existing initiatives and strategies that can impact seniors earlier in their life course and thereby have an impact on the health of seniors in the future. One specific research focus is on building and sustaining healthy and supportive environments for seniors. Social connectedness is key factor in creating a supportive environment and, as such, impacts health and aging (WHO, 2013; Butler-Jones, 2010). By considering music as a vehicle for social connectedness and its resulting ripple effect on health, this study adopts a life course perspective to explore the experiences of older adults and their connections with music at this later stage of life.

Purpose and Research Question

This study takes up the challenge issued by the WHO and by Canada's Chief Public Health Officer to use a life course framework in research intended to benefit an ageing population. The reflections of older adult wind players playing in a wind band as a health

promoting activity are explored in the context of the following question: How do longtime wind players experience playing in a wind band as a health promoting activity?

A Little About Me

My own history informed and shaped the investigation of this research question. Music camp between grade six and seven was my first band experience. It was the first time I blew through a flute and the first time I made music with a group of wind players under the direction of a conductor. At the end of five days we played the theme to “M*A*S*H*” with great gusto and I was hooked. In junior high, band was where I could be myself, where I made deep and lasting friendships, and where I was inspired to become a music teacher. I loved every step of the process: learning music, practicing, rehearsing and performing. My involvement in music gave me opportunities to travel, meet new people, and - most powerfully - to play music in new settings. I was transformed by a concert I played in eighth grade in a cathedral in Montreal. It was the most beautiful place I had ever played in and the sound transported me above our stands to fly with the angels perched on the arches over the pulpit. What power, what beauty. I knew deep within myself that the experience was profound and that being part of the whole ensemble was what made it so all encompassing. This was what I wanted to do with my life.

In 1995 I attended a two-week conducting workshop with Eugene Migliaro Corporon at the University of North Texas as part of my audition to enter as a Master’s student in the Wind Conducting program. There I was introduced to a scientific reason why people connect with making music. Mr. Corporon had participated in a study of conductors using imaging technology to monitor their brain activity when listening to a familiar piece of music, when conducting along with the recording, and when mentally conducting through the piece with no recording. First Mr. Corporon showed us a colour picture of his brain at rest, primarily cool blues and greens. He

then showed us the picture of his brain on the final of the three tasks, mentally imaging conducting through the piece. To great effect he held up the first picture and said, “This is your brain.” Next he held aloft the second image – now alight with red, yellow, and orange – and said, “This is your brain on music.” I could see what I had intuitively known: that music and the brain were deeply connected. The idea of “lighting up” the brains of others through music has been a goal of mine ever since.

In December 2012, my grandmother Norma Dalen passed away at the age of 90. All her life she played organ and piano and sang for church, choir, and community. Even when her mobility was terribly restricted and movement was extremely painful, she would slowly make her way with her walker up to the common area in Luther Tower to play for chapel. One wall of her tiny apartment was dedicated to a piano so that her hymnbook – always ready to be opened - had a place to sit. Her lifelong connection to music gave her purpose, meaning, and connection to others throughout the decades of her widowhood and her senior years. She is a testament to music making as a health promoting activity through a connection of mind, body, and spirit. She taught me much about living a meaningful life and it is with this in mind that I ground my curiosity in exploring the experiences of older adults making music in a wind ensemble.

Definition of Terms

Health and well-being. For the purposes of this study the definition of health comes from a population health perspective. Frankish, Green, Ratner, Chomik and Larsen (1996) defined health as “the capacity of people to adapt to, respond to, or control life’s challenges and changes” (p. 6). This concept of health as a capacity rather than a state suggests health is a resource that can be developed. This definition affirms the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (1986), which indicated that in order to be healthy, “an individual or a group must be able to

identify and to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment” (“Health Promotion,” para. 1).

In 1948, the WHO described health as the “state of complete physical, emotional and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (p. 100). While this study approaches health from a capacity perspective rather than a state perspective, the WHO’s description of health extends the definition to encompass three aspects of well-being: physical, emotional, and social. This study considers these aspects of well-being as integral parts of the capacity for health mentioned above. In this way health and well-being may and will be used interchangeably throughout the document.

Life course. The life course is a path that an individual follows from birth to death. This path can change or evolve at any life stage and varies from person to person, depending the interaction of biological, behavioural, psychological, and societal factors (Hertzman & Power, 2003).

Older adult. For the purposes of this study the term ‘older adult’ will refer to people born during or before 1959. In 2014, these people are age 55 or older.

Thesis Organization

Following this introductory chapter are four chapters. Chapter 2 is a review of literature in the context of the Baby Boomers generation and its implications for health; social connectedness and social determinants of health; music and older adults; music making as a health promoting activity; and lifelong learning. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology and includes basic interpretive design, recruitment, data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations. Chapter 4 includes the results of the study and presents the overarching themes drawn from the data. These themes are guided using key elements of wind ensemble playing as a

metaphor (instrumentation, sound and performance). Chapter 5 begins with a summary of the key findings. This is followed by a discussion of the results in the context of existing literature, strengths and limitations of the current study, and implications for practice and future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, research around the topic of older adults playing in a wind band as a health promoting activity is reviewed through a series of concentric circles that begin broadly by identifying why older adults are the focus of this study. A discussion about the current demographic shift in Canada introduces the concept of healthy aging, of which a key component is social connectedness. Social connectedness is a social determinant of health and further discussion explores how these determinants impact and influence the health of older adults. As the concentric circles move inward, the specific choice of music as a vehicle for social connectedness is explored, as is its role as a health promoting activity. It is at this juncture that music itself is parsed to distinguish music making as a distinct activity that itself can be healthful as well as the implication of music making on lifelong learning and the benefits of cognitive stimulation as an indicator of healthy aging.

Research was conducted using key-word searches (e.g., older adults and healthy aging, older adults and music making, adult wind band, healthy aging, aging and social connectedness, aging and social determinants of health), first through broad searches (e.g., Google Scholar, USearch) and then across databases (e.g., PsychINFO, ERIC (Ovid), ProQuest Education Journals, ProQuest Nursing & Allied Health Source). Strategies for effective searches were informed by research workshops and an individual session with a university librarian.

Background to the Problem

The Baby Boomers. In 2011 a major demographic event began as the Canadian population saw a generation wave crest as the first of the Baby Boomers, people born between 1946 and 1965, reached the age of 65. By 2031 the last of the Baby Boomers will have reached

age 65 and seniors will represent 23% of the Canadian Population (Statistics Canada, 2012). This will be the largest cohort of seniors in Canadian history (Butler-Jones, 2010).

A complex web of interconnected threads has changed what being a senior in Canada means. Public health improvements and social investments in old age security means increased longevity and a healthier, older and more numerous aging population (Butler-Jones, 2010). While the WHO identifies an aging population as a triumph of modern society, it is not without challenge. Shifting cultural landscapes bring more people from rural to urban settings for greater employment and educational opportunities and move families away from their elders (Butler-Jones, 2010). This has led to the development of numerous programs to facilitate independent living of older adults in Canada while at the same time raising concern about increasing isolation and disconnectedness among seniors. Indeed, social connectedness is identified as a key area that can impact healthy aging (Butler-Jones, 2010).

Butler-Jones' (2010) report on healthy aging in Canada challenges researchers to build on existing initiatives and strategies that impact the health of seniors and that could impact the health of all Canadians earlier in their lifecourse, thereby impacting the health of seniors in the future. The report identifies two areas for action to create the conditions for healthy aging. These are (a) improving data and increasing knowledge on seniors' health, and (b) building and sustaining healthy and supportive environments.

Healthy aging. In 1948 the WHO described health as the “state of complete physical, emotional and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (p. 100). The breadth of this historic definition still resonates today. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada (2011), at each stage of life health is determined by complex interactions between social and economic factors, the physical environment, and individual behaviours. Often these factors

are influenced by wealth, status, and resources that, in turn, also influence policies and choices leading to different experiences in health status for individuals and populations (WHO, 2002). This definition reflects a shift away from individual health (i.e., a lack of illness) to a population health approach that aims to improve the health of the entire population and reduce health inequities by looking at a broad range of factors that influence health.

According to Coffman (2008), the baby boom generation is “redefining concepts of retirement and old age” and has raised general interest in what healthy aging means to this more active population (p. 50). In Canada, the term “healthy aging” describes the process of optimizing opportunities for physical, social and mental health (Butler-Jones, 2010). Internationally, the WHO (2002) used the term “active aging” to refer to the same process and broadened the discussion by further defining a healthy aging approach as one that moves beyond the experience of seniors to include an understanding of how experiences earlier in the life course create conditions that influence health and quality of life as individuals age. The Public Health Agency of Canada uses the life course approach as a framework from which to understand the impact that earlier experiences and conditions have on later health outcomes. This approach “ensures healthy aging is considered in the context of the entire lifespan, rather than merely as a late-life phenomenon” (Butler-Jones, 2010, Aging and Lifecourse section, para. 2).

A focus on healthy aging not only benefits the individual, but also has implications for a broader context. The Canadian government has joined in international focus on this issue, seeing healthy aging as an investment for the future that holds monetary weight. Healthy aging can “minimize the severity of chronic diseases in later life, thus saving health care costs and reducing long-term care needs” (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2011, p. 6-7). Indeed, the World Health

Organization (2005) suggested that a focus on healthy aging should be a key aim of government policy by encouraging good eating and health habits, physical activity, and social connectedness.

Social connectedness and healthy aging. The Public Health Agency of Canada (2011) identified social connectedness as one of five key focus areas for healthy aging in Canada. Social connectedness is linked specifically to mental health promotion and its positive effect on well-being and a person's ability to cope with life challenges and transitions. Betts, Adams, Leibrandt, and Moon (2011) conducted a critical review of gerontological literature on social and leisure activity and well-being in later life. Their analysis of 42 studies indicated that the relationships between social participation and health are not well understood and may function through multiple avenues that impact health. These avenues are widespread, from social isolation's physiological impact on the immune system to social ties encouraging health-promoting activities like quitting smoking or eating healthier. They also noted that the psychological effects of social connectedness can include feelings of self-efficacy, a sense of purpose, and better mental health. Gilmour's (2012) study, based on a 2008/2009 Canadian Community Health Survey, found that 80% of seniors were frequent participants in at least one social activity. As the number of different types of social activities increased, so did the relationship between social participation and positive, self-perceived health. As the number of social activities decreased, there was a related increase in loneliness and life dissatisfaction by seniors. Greater social participation was positively associated with self-perceived health and negatively associated with loneliness and life dissatisfaction. Data from an earlier Canadian Community Health Survey (Shields & Martel, 2006) indicated that seniors who reported a strong sense of community belonging are 62% more likely to report self-perceived good health, compared to 49% who felt less connected.

Seniors who feel less connected and do not participate in social activities may experience barriers that limit their social engagement and social connectedness. Gilmour (2012) found that the most frequent barrier to social participation was health limitations, followed by being too busy and personal or family responsibilities. As part of a larger *Music for Life* project, Hallam, Creech, Varvarigou and McQueen (2012) found multiple participation barriers in their study of 398 older people involved in active music making through three adult music programs in Britain. Participants identified structural barriers (i.e., issues related to finance, location, timing and transportation); informational barriers (e.g., difficulty locating opportunities to make music); social barriers (e.g. other commitments, ethnicity, gender and social class); and personal and dispositional barriers including experiences of isolation within seniors housing projects.

Social determinants of health. Gerontologist Chappell's (2011) discussion of prevention and health promotion issues acknowledged that a prevention-based approach moves away from specific treatment of individual health issues into the realm of cognitive abilities, personal health behaviours, and psychological and social factors. She noted that prevention and health promotion lead to social determinants of health, to places where socio-economic status and the distribution of resources indicate a growing gap between Canada's rich and poor. Social determinants of health are socio-economic factors that cause, impact, or influence health outcomes (Butler-Jones, 2010). The World Health Organization (2013) indicated these are the circumstances in which people are born, live, work, play, interact, and age. While these determinants affect people throughout the life course, the cumulative effect is more apparent as people age (Butler-Jones, 2010).

Research on older adults' participation in music making activities identifies a social economic status divide. Participants in a British study conducted by Hallam et al. (2012) were

predominantly female, Caucasian, from professional backgrounds, and whose childhoods included some music making activity. Coffman's (2008) survey of 1,654 members of New Horizons International Music Association members revealed that a typical member is an individual of approximately 70 years of age, of average health, college educated with above average income, and has previous experience playing their instrument in high school.

Livesay, Morrison, Clift and Camic (2012) conducted a cross-national survey of choir members to explore the benefits of singing for mental well-being and perceived health benefits. Although a majority of the 169 respondents were female and over the age of 50, comparisons were made between different ages, genders, and nationalities, as well as between participants with high and low reported well-being indicators. Data analysis indicated no difference in the frequency of response themes across socio-demographic and well-being categories. These results suggest that the benefits of singing may cut across homogenous populations with no impact on benefits according to age, gender, nationality, or well-being status.

Music in the lives of older people. The concept of healthy aging has placed a focus on aging that moves beyond achieving longevity to the quality of those extended years past middle age (Coffman, 2002; Solé, Mercadal-Brotons, Gallego & Riera, 2010). The population health perspective and consideration of the social determinants of health has extended research and development into cognitive abilities, personal health behaviours, and psychological and social factors (Chappell, 2011). Coffman (2002) noted that this shift can be called a variety of things including: quality of life, life satisfaction, meaning of life, sense of purpose, successful aging, well-being, and wellness. Music researchers, music therapists, and music educators have responded to this shift of focus away from service for children and youth to explore music and its impacts on quality of life for people across the life course (Coffman, 2002). Indeed, both passive

music activities such as music listening and active music activities such as playing an instrument can affect older adults' perceptions of quality of life (Coffman, 2002; Solé, Mercadal-Brotons, Gallego & Riera, 2010).

Lee, Chan, and Mok (2010) conducted a quantitative study looking at the effects of music listening on the quality of life of older people at a community centre in Hong Kong. Participants were randomly assigned to either the control group (quiet relaxation) or a music group that received 30-minute sessions of self-selected relaxation music through an mp3 player over a four-week period. Results indicated that participants in the music group had significantly improved quality of life scores on most of the subscales and had shifted overall toward a statistically significant more desirable state of well-being than the control group by the end of the study. In their discussion, Lee, Chan and Mok described music as having a multidimensional nature that reached people on physical, psychological, spiritual and social levels of consciousness. It was this multidimensionality, they reported, that allowed music to reach older adults during times of isolation, physical pain, or decreased ability to communicate.

Hays and Minichiello (2005a) used a broad definition of music experience in their qualitative study of Australian older adults. For the purpose of their study, music included either music listening, music making activities, or working as a volunteer in an area of music. They looked at experience of music and focused on the emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual well-being roles that music played in the lives of older adults through a series of in-depth interviews. Specifically, Hays and Minichiello looked at how the meaning of music was constructed in the lives of older adults. The participants came from a wide range of locations across Australia (rural and urban) and included both professional musician and those who had little or no training in music. Their findings indicated that music provided participants with ways

of knowing and understanding self and others, and expression of their spirituality. Music provided participants with ways to construct meaning in their lives. In a second publication based on the same study, Hays and Minichiello (2005b) discussed findings from in-depth interviews that followed two focus groups. Results focused attention on the ways in which music contributed to self-identity and quality of life for older adults. In addition to themes of well-being, connection, and spirituality, music was reported to have a strong therapeutic effect and to alleviate stress. In this way the study suggested that music can be a way to maintain balance in life.

Solé, Mercadal-Brotons, Gallego, and Riera (2010) reported findings in Spain regarding older adults' motivation for participation in music activities. Their study of 83 seniors who enrolled in either a choir, music appreciation class, or a preventative music therapy program measured quality of life at the beginning and end of the activity using a quality of life questionnaire. For all three activities participants expressed that their primary reason for enrolling was the possibility to meet new people and form new friendships, followed by a desire to learn more about music.

Music making in the lives of older adults. The literature tends to make a distinction between passive (i.e., listening) and active music making. According to Small (1998), musicking is any activity involving or related to music performance. David Elliott (1995) elaborated on this important distinction in musical discourse by noting that “musicing reminds us that performing and improvising through singing and playing instruments lies at the heart of MUSIC as a diverse human practice” (p.49). Philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff underscored this by saying, “the basic reality of music is not works nor the composition of works but music making” (as cited in Elliott, 1995).

Coffman and Adamek (1999) surveyed 52 members of a voluntary senior wind band. When asked how participation in a band has impacted their sense of well-being, participants identified social interactions, a sense of personal well-being and accomplishment, and enriching recreational activities as factors that increased their sense of well-being. Findings indicated that the desire for socialization and for active music making were the players' primary motivations for participating in the ensemble. These motivations ranked as highly as family relationships and good health on measures of quality of life.

Dabback (2008, 2010) pointed to the reconceptualization of self that life course changes like retirement can prompt. Moving into this new stage of life can mean moving away from existing social circles (e.g., those found in the workplace) and the "loss of networks that defined them for much of their adult lives can engender feeling of sadness and depression" (Dabback, 2010, p. 60). In 2008, Dabback studied how members of a senior adult band perceived their musical activities as way to discover new purpose in their lives. They described the loss of professional identity through retirement as disorienting. In this qualitative study, participants indicated their engagement in the band gave them a sense of identity as a valuable contributor to a larger ensemble. This participation was valued by themselves, by others in the group, and by people in their immediate social network (e.g., family and close friends). Participation in the group also provided temporal structure throughout the week that also contributed to self-perceptions as healthy, productive adults.

Hallam et al. (2012) noted similar findings around engagement in music making as a source of temporal organization, purpose, and social support. Participants in this British study also noted challenge and enjoyment as significant outcomes from their music making activities. Demographically, the participants were predominantly female, Caucasian, from professional

backgrounds, and had experience making music as a child. Hallam and colleagues suggested that participants' continued engagement in music making reflects a cycle of positive reinforcement through the interchange of sustained autonomy, control, and social affirmation.

Coffman's (2008) survey of 1,654 members of New Horizons International Music Association members built a typical profile of individuals involved in the association and categorized their comments based on perceived results of participation. Of those who responded, 74% indicated emotional well-being benefits, 24% noted physical well-being benefits, 21% indicated cognitive stimulation benefits, and 20% mentioned socialization benefits. For adults participating in the New Horizons program, benefits to their health were numerous and impacted multiple factors of well-being, including social, emotional, cognitive, and physical.

Singing as a health promoting activity. While this study focuses on instrumental music making within the context of a wind band, a brief overview of some of the recent literature reviews involving singing as a health promoting activity will provide context for the current study. Just as singing involves the breath, so does wind playing. Clift, Nicol, Raisbeck, Whitmore, and Morrison (2010) explored literature related to health and well-being in the context of group singing. They identified four groupings of research: qualitative research on groups already in existence in communities, including those targeting specific populations; experimental research involving choirs or group singing for specific research purposes; group singing as a therapeutic intervention; and group singing for older people with dementia. After reviewing literature published between 2000 and 2010, Clift et al. (2010) noted health benefits beyond psychological and social benefits that included physical benefits. Areas of physical benefit included improved breathing, speech, and posture.

Gick (2011) reviewed literature on singing, health, and well-being from a health

psychology perspective. This review of singing was not limited to group singing and was organized by biological, psychological, and social factors that contribute to health. The study also looked at the mood, stress, and social responses of both amateur and professional singers. Although Gick's findings were often inconclusive, possible benefits of breathing and short-term immune system response were indicated.

Southcott (2009), and Skingley and Vella-Burrow (2010) explored the effects of singing for older people. Southcott's phenomenological case study of a small choir called the Happy Wanderers explored music and positive aging through the experiences of this group of older people who performed for residents of care facilities and people with dementia. Significant themes that emerged included maintaining a sense of purpose, forging a relationship between group members, and personal growth. Choir member Kent summed up these identified themes identified while reflecting on the history of the group:

We are fourteen years old and wonder where the time has gone. As the saying goes, time flies when you're having fun. We are as busy as ever and are still wanted by our regulars. It really feels like visiting family at some of these places. (Southcott, 2009, p. 153)

The social connectedness embedded in these themes is indicative of healthy aging (Butler-Jones, 2010). Skingley and Vella-Burrow's (2010) review of the therapeutic effects of music singing for older people in nursing and health literature uncovered two reviews and 16 research reports. The review found that the majority of literature was intervention based; although plentiful, it was "diverse and small-scale" (p. 40). The evidence relating singing and music to health and well-being was strongest in research focusing on people suffering from dementia. The study noted that research provided little specific guidance on implementing music or singing with patients.

Lifelong learning. Does lifelong learning play a role in healthy aging? The WHO's 1948 definition of health as the "state of complete physical, emotional and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (p. 100) suggests that there is a space within the complex fabric of health and well-being to consider lifelong learning. Indeed, gerontologist Chappell's (2011) discussion of prevention and health promotion for older adults includes cognitive abilities as one of the areas indicated for intervention and 21% of older adults participating in the New Horizons International Music Association indicated cognitive stimulation as a benefit of participation (Coffman, 2008). Jenkins (2011) undertook a large-scale quantitative analysis to study the impact of learning on the well-being of older adults. By analyzing multiple waves of longitudinal data from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing, Jenkins studied three forms of learning and a range of well-being measures. The three forms of learning investigated were formal courses, music/arts/evening classes, and gym/exercise classes. Across the three waves of data studied, the results consistently indicated that the music/arts/evening classes were significantly associated with changes in each available measure of well-being. While this quantitative data did not explain why this was the case, it did note that the likelihood of participation in all learning activities later in life was strongly related to prior education. Again, issues of the social determinants of health pose limitations and challenges for understanding music making as a health promoting activity.

Summary

This literature review included research situating the current study in terms of the baby boom generation and its implications for health; social connectedness as a social determinant of health; music and older adults; and, in particular, music making as a health promoting activity and means for lifelong learning. There is a lack of research into health benefits associated with

wind bands and, more specifically, qualitative inquiries of wind instrumentalists. Using a basic descriptive qualitative research design, the reflections of older adult wind players playing in a wind band as a health promoting activity are explored in the context of the following question: How do longtime wind players experience playing in a wind band as a health promoting activity?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Using a basic descriptive qualitative research design, the reflections of older adult wind players playing in a wind band as a health promoting activity were explored using the following question: How do longtime wind players experience playing in a wind band as a health promoting activity? This chapter begins with a discussion of qualitative research and the constructivist paradigm. An outline of Merriam's (2009) basic qualitative inquiry approach is followed by details of sample selection and recruitment, data collection and analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

Design of the Study

Qualitative research and constructivist paradigm. Mayan (2009) evocatively depicted the essence of qualitative research as one where “the researcher’s aim not to limit a phenomenon – make it neat, tidy, and comfortable – but to break it open, unfasten or interrupt it so that a description of the phenomenon, in all of its contradictions, messiness, and depth is (re)presented” (p. 11). Qualitative research is focused on process, meaning and understanding (Merriam, 2009). In order to “break open” the process of meaning making, this study is informed by the tenets of social constructivism.

Social constructivism is built on an ontological understanding that multiple realities of a phenomenon exist as individuals construct knowledge through social interactions with cultural, historical, and political events and processes (Hays & Singh, 2012). By reflecting on experiences, each individual constructs their own understanding of the world. In a research setting, understanding is co-constructed between the researcher and the participant; this co-construction is a key component of a basic interpretive qualitative research design.

Merriam (2009) identified four characteristics of basic interpretive qualitative research, a term used to describe her approach to doing qualitative research. First, the focus is on understanding meaning through the ways people interpret their experiences. Second, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. From a social constructivist paradigm, the data is co-created through the interaction of the researcher and the participant, as both individuals bring their constructed realities to the question at hand. Third, the research process is inductive, building toward generalizations and theory by working from specific observations to note patterns; from these patterns, tentative hypotheses are generated. These tentative hypotheses lead to conclusions and theories. Finally, from this inductive process, “the product of qualitative inquiry is rich description,” (Merriam, 2009, p. 16).

A basic qualitative research approach suits the purpose of this study, which is to explore the participation of older adult wind players playing in a wind band as a health promoting activity. Understanding the multi-faceted meaning participants have made out of their experiences through rich data based in their own language of understanding, gathered in concert with a musician/researcher, necessitates the flexibility and responsiveness inherent in basic qualitative design.

Sample selection. Purposive sampling was used to recruit “information rich cases for study in depth,” (Patton, 2002, p. 230). Criteria were used in order to find participants with information rich histories that directly reflected the purpose of the study. Participants were required to hold a belief that playing in a wind band has implications for their health; be 55 years of age or older; and currently play a wind instrument in a wind band. Unexpectedly, gender also became a criterion for inclusion as a result of who responded to the recruitment e-mail.

Because this study looked to gather information on playing in a wind band as a health promoting activity from a place further along the life course, participation was limited to those born in or before 1959. In 2014, this cohort of people would be 55 years or older. Current participation in a wind band was required to increase the likelihood of rich description. A life course perspective ensured that a trajectory of experience over time could be described. While participants did not need to have played the same wind instrument, nor did they need to have played a wind instrument consistently throughout the years, experience playing a wind instrument over the course of their lives provided a rough, common temporal framework among participants.

Sample size. For the purposes of this study, sample size was determined by a judgment that sufficient richness of data was achieved in the analysis. Based on the expected, reasonable coverage of this phenomenon and in keeping with other similar theses (e.g., Armstrong, 2013; Sandham, 2012; Siemens, 2006), the sample size was five participants.

Recruitment. Recruitment of participants occurred by connecting with the memberships of established adult band organizations. Upon receiving approval by their respective boards of governance, the invitation for participation was sent out through e-mail lists to adult community band programs in a city in Saskatchewan (see Appendix A). Seventeen responses were received. Responses were evaluated in the order they were received. Three respondents did not reply to the follow up email requesting an interview time. Four respondents did not meet the criteria for selection. Six individuals were interviewed, five men and one woman. Preliminary analyses determined sufficient richness in the five men's transcripts and the sixth transcript was removed from the data set in order to further delineate the phenomenon under study, that is, the reflections of older adult male wind players on wind ensemble participation as a health-promoting activity.

Four respondents remained on a waiting list and indicated they would be available if more data collection was necessary.

Data collection. The primary form of data collection was one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Each individual interview was between 60 and 90 minutes long, audio-recorded and fully transcribed. Due to the personal nature of health experiences, the individual private interview format was most suitable for the comfort of the participant. Furthermore, as Merriam (2009) noted, interviewing allows information to be gathered that cannot be observed. We cannot observe certain behaviours, feelings or how people make meaning and interpret the world around them. Several participants became quite emotional during the interview and were not able to speak past their emotions. In these instances it was important to be able to note the body language and physical experience of the participant in order to be responsive to their needs during the interview. These details also facilitated understanding the meaning of their words during the transcribing and analysis process. Lastly, the one-on-one format allows for high levels of researcher responsivity to the participants and their unique ways of making meaning. A semi-structured interview “allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” (Merriam, 2009, p. 90; see Appendix B). This format also enables ongoing data analysis throughout the interview process.

Secondary sources of data included demographic information (see Appendix C), field notes, and researcher reflections. Demographic data were collected at the end of the interview in a structured format to gather information in a time efficient and consistent manner. Field notes of the interviews and process of conducting the study were kept in a notebook, and researcher reflections were kept in a journal.

Data analysis. The data set for this study consisted primarily of five transcribed interviews with the addition of demographic information, field notes, and researcher reflections. Using the qualitative analytic method of thematic analysis to explore from an inductive approach how longtime wind players' experiences playing in a wind band as a health promoting activity means that identified themes are data-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Using the inductive approach suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), data were read and re-read for any themes related to health and coded diversely without being constrained by any themes previously identified in the literature review.

By analyzing the data at the semantic or explicit level, themes were identified within surface meanings of the data and without the researcher drawing meaning beyond what was said by the participant (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As a guide for the overall general analysis trajectory, the following process was used:

Ideally the analytic process involves a progression from description, where the data have simply been organized to show patterns in semantic content, and summarized, to interpretation, where there is an attempt to theorize the significance of the patterns and their broader meanings and implications, often in relation to previous literature. (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84)

For Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis involves searching across the data set to find "repeated patterns of meaning" (p. 83). To facilitate this, they identified a six-step guide to thematic analysis that was used in the analysis phase of this study. What follows is a brief description of this process. It is important to note that the process is recursive and not linear, as the analysis moves back and forth between the steps and between the data and the researcher. Step one involved familiarizing myself with the data I conducted all the interviews myself and

made field notes and researcher reflections upon completion of each session. After transcribing and then editing each interview transcript, I re-read the complete data set three times, making notes for myself regarding possible patterns, meanings, connections, and questions. Braun and Clarke (2006) noted that the transcription process can be seen as an “interpretive act” (p. 87) where meaning is created and as an excellent way to become familiar with the data. Step two involved generating initial codes that organized the data items (i.e., individual interviews) into meaningful groups. I began with the first interview and worked through to the final interview using NVivo 10 for Mac as a tool to code the transcripts. Following Braun and Clarke’s (2006) key advice I: (a) coded for as many patterns as possible to keep the process open, (b) included surrounding data for each piece to provide context for potential use later on, and (c) coded individual pieces of data into as many different themes as fit. I also coded data that did not appear to fit or seemed to stray from the research question in order to allow for rich description. Step three involved searching for themes by looking at the codes and sorting them into potential theme areas. To facilitate this step I created an initial theme map as a place to organize and conceptualize the data. Step four involved reviewing the themes and refining first within the coded extracts under each theme for a coherent pattern and then between themes to recognize places where themes may go together. This led to step five: defining and naming the themes concisely so that the reader would get a quick sense of what each theme was about. Finally, step six involved putting words to the data analysis and interpretation of the data.

Representation of findings. As a conducting student I was encouraged, reprimanded and inspired by my mentor, Eugene Migliaro Corporon, to show, don’t tell. The essence of conducting is using movement to translate intention and expression into the art of sound. Given this philosophical underpinning, vocative text resonated with me when choosing how best to

represent the findings of this study. Indeed, van Manen (1997) described vocative text as a thoughtful and suggestive approach that shows experientially rather than tells rationally through a declarative approach. Show; don't tell.

It has been an honour to meet the participants in this study, to hear their experiences, to share their tears and laughter, and to be given their words to work with. LaLonde (2009) described one purpose of transferring knowledge generated in a qualitative study in an evocative manner was to capture the core of the experience and to reveal it. As I worked with the words of these individuals it struck me many times that my paraphrasing would not do justice to the holistic experience they were sharing. Their words were powerful, direct representations of personal experiences and were, in themselves, best representation of the data. As a result, direct quotations are used in presenting the findings of this study. Contextual pieces are included in square brackets to provide descriptive details that contributed to the meaning of the words.

My second intention in using vocative text was to better represent the human quality of lived experience in order to touch readers by engaging them personally, holistically, emotionally, intellectually, and viscerally (Nicol, 2008; Jessop, 2014). A musical metaphor was deliberately chosen in the end stages of thematic analysis to serve as a conceptual format from which to organize, elucidate and intensify aspects health through ensemble playing. This metaphor orchestrated the presentation of the research in a focused manner that is deeply connected to the act of music making in a wind band. It is my hope that use of vocative text served the higher purpose to show, don't tell.

Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research

Morrow (2005) discussed across paradigm criteria for conducting quality research from a counselling psychology perspective. To consider the quality and trustworthiness of qualitative

research she identified four “transcendent standards:” social validity, subjectivity and reflexivity, adequacy of data, and adequacy of interpretation (p. 250). The trustworthiness of the current study will be established by exploring each standard.

Social validity. Morrow (2005) noted that the basic principles underlying the discipline of counselling psychology are profoundly connected to the notion of social validity. She cited concepts like prevention, psychology of work, and diversity as inherent to the work of counselling psychologists. The Canadian definition of counselling psychology begins with the following statement:

Counselling psychology is a broad specialization within professional psychology concerned with using psychological principles to enhance and promote the positive growth, well-being, and mental health of individuals, families, groups, and the broader community. Counselling psychologists bring a collaborative, developmental, multicultural, and wellness perspective to their research and practice. (Canadian Psychological Association, 2009)

At its core this study is an exploration in counselling psychology of a question related to healthy aging and well-being across the life course; as such, it has merit as a study of social validity.

Subjectivity and reflexivity. Basic interpretive qualitative research uses the researcher as the primary instrument. This human instrument has inherent biases and limitations that cannot be eliminated. Rather, Merriam (2009) noted that these biases and shortcomings should be identified and monitored in relation to how they shape the collection and interpretation of the data. While initially this appears to be a limitation to the validity of the research, from another perspective it is a key ingredient to the rich depth of data sought through qualitative research. Peshkin (1988) extended the perspective on subjectivity by suggesting it “can be seen as

virtuous, for it is the basis of researchers making a distinctive contribution, one that results from the unique configuration of their personal qualities joined to the data they have collected” (p. 18). My background as a wind player, ensemble musician, conductor, and teacher enabled me to move deeper into the interview process as a result of my familiarity with the specific setting of the phenomenon being studied. By using participant checks in two ways I endeavoured to ensure fair representation of the data. First, participants were sent the transcript for checking to see that what is in print reflected what they expressed in the interview. Secondly and more effectively, checking with participants in vivo for researcher understanding during the interview process allowed for immediacy of understanding and to inform the direction of the discourse (Morrow, 2005).

In order to manage biases and assumptions Morrow (2005) noted that reflexivity, or self-reflection, can be carried out in a number of ways. This includes a self-reflective journal in which a researcher keeps a record of emerging awareness around bias and subjectivity through recording reactions to experiences as the process of qualitative research unfolds. By maintaining a self-reflection journal I was able to set aside or bracket these self-revelations to the best of my ability, so they did not unduly influence the research. Another approach Morrow (2005) suggested is research team debriefing. Regular debriefing with my research supervisor provided a forum to monitor and question issues around bias and assumptions.

Adequacy of data. Morrow (2005) indicated that a common concern for qualitative researchers in counselling psychology is the typically small number of interview participants. She went on to clarify that “far more important than sample size are sampling procedures: quality, length, and depth of interview data; and variety of evidence” (p. 255). This study used purposive sampling to recruit participants that were playing in adult bands. The semi-structured

interview format allows for a certain amount of “emergent design sensitive to the growing body of data” (p. 255). Adequate variety of data was ensured through the use of multiple data sources including demographic information, interview transcripts, field notes, and research journaling.

Adequacy of interpretation. According to Morrow (2005), data analysis, interpretation, and writing is an interactive process that takes place over the whole course of the research. Immersion in the data begins during data collection, continues throughout the process, and is a key factor in developing rich data. Using constant comparison as an analytical framework guides the interpretive process as themes emerge and, in turn, inform data interpretation. While writing the results, balance was sought between the researcher’s insights and interpretations and the participants’ quotations. This is fundamental to developing an interpretation that is meaningful and fair in its representation of the experiences and meaning making of the participants.

Ethical Considerations

General considerations were attended to and approval was sought through the University of Saskatchewan Behavioral Ethics Research Committee. The ethics application form requires researchers to consider any conflict of interest, estimate the risks and benefits of participation, address the informed consent procedure, and discuss plans for recruitment and data collection.

There was minimal risk to participants in this study. Yet a possible source of conflict of interest existed for myself as the researcher because of the possibility of past and future relationships with participants in the context of musician interaction. I do not currently play or conduct any of the adult bands targeted in the purposive sampling process. On very rare occasions in the past, however, I have acted as a substitute director when asked to cover for unexpected absences by the regular conductors of various adult community bands. As previously mentioned, these experiences and my activity as a professional flute player may, in fact, assisted

in building rapport between researcher and participant given a shared level of understanding about the specific musical experience of a wind band. However, to ensure participant protection and to alleviate any feelings of pressure, it was conveyed to all participants that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any point until the completion of the final manuscript.

Informed consent forms about the potential risks and benefits of the study and participant rights were presented to participants prior to the interview (see Appendix D). Due to the small nature of the musical community, issues of confidentiality and anonymity are crucial and were addressed through the informed consent process. Participants were informed that, to protect their anonymity, their name and other identifying information would not be used in the study.

Pseudonyms were used, and quotations have been edited to eliminate or alter identifying information such as location, ensemble, and musician names. Participants were informed that the interviews would be transcribed and they would have an opportunity to check the transcript for any additions or changes they wished to make before it was used. Participants were also provided with a data release form at the interview; this allowed for the research findings to be used in this thesis and possibly shared through an article in a peer reviewed journal or in a presentation at a research conference (see Appendix E). Participants were invited to receive information about the research results if they were interested.

Chapter 4: Results

Presentation of the results of this study begins with an introduction to the participants who contributed their experiences. The overarching themes that were identified through the analysis of the participant transcripts are then discussed and illustrated using participant quotations. Elements of a wind ensemble are used as a metaphor to provide a rich way of presenting the data as fundamentally tied to the specific act of making music in a wind ensemble. The three main components of the metaphor and their corresponding themes are: Instrumentation: Defining Roles (Purpose), Sound: Making Meaning (Physical and Emotional Well-being), and Performance: Extending Self (Challenge, Accomplishment and Connection). The themes are further discussed and reviewed to end the chapter.

The Participants

Five men – four brass players and one woodwind player – ranging in age from 58 to 76 and representing five different adult bands participated in the study. The number of years each participant had played in band ranged from eight to fifty; collectively, the sample represented one hundred fifty-six years of ensemble experience. One participant was retired and the others were still working, although two indicated they would be retiring in the next year or two. All participants graduated from high school; three held undergraduate degrees and one participant held a Master's degree. Their annual incomes ranged from \$40,000-\$49,000 to \$150,000+. Four of the five grew up in a small town or rural area. The elementary schools they attended were small, often with multiple grades in one class. Two of the participants were sent to boarding school for high school. Two of the participants were divorced and four of the five currently live with a spouse. A brief description of each participant follows in order to better come to know and

understand the men before presenting the thematic analyses. The first four participants introduced – Peter, Roger, Carter, Steven – all share a rural or small town upbringing.

Peter. Peter grew up in a rural area and, through his school program, began to play in a band at the age of eleven. He had a vivid memory of beginning to play the flute. He and the one other student who was learning the flute began by blowing across the top piece of the flute- the headjoint- in order to be able to make a sound before adding the complexity of the fingers and keys. This task was left for them to figure out on their own and without interrupting the rest of the class with his noisy effort. To that end, because there was nowhere else for them to go in the school without disturbing someone, the teacher sent them to sit in his car in the parking lot to try and get a sound on the head-joint of a flute. This unorthodox method worked. Peter went on to be very involved in his school in general and he took a special leadership role in the music program. He would sometimes run the warm-up exercises with the class when the itinerant band teacher was running late travelling between schools in the surrounding towns. Peter also played in a special group where motivated students from the wide catchment area of the school division were bused to meet as a large group once a week. He continued with his high level of involvement until he dropped out of school in Grade 12. Though he did return to finish his Grade 12 education, he did not return to playing in band until his thirties, when his wife noticed an ad in the local newspaper inviting individuals interested in creating an adult band to attend a meeting. He went and became a founding member and president of this new organization. Through adult band he moved from playing the flute to the trombone. His experiences playing music as an adult have given him a sense of purpose and feelings of accomplishment. Most profoundly for Peter, the beauty of the sound and the act of creating sound itself is a vehicle that transports him to a place of focus and joy, one that lifts him out of the stress of his everyday life.

I find that it is something that brings me a lot of joy and helps me deal with a lot of stress and helps me walk away from my world for three hours once a week. I can just get lost in the music and focus on that, and take a break from reality, expose myself to a different reality, however you want to look at it. – Peter

Roger. Roger actually started with the piano. He was told by his mother he “had to learn to play the piano;” and although it did not make sense to him why he needed to do this, he began at age seven and took lessons until he was fifteen, completing his Grade 8 Royal Conservatory and Grade 5 Theory. The piano became a point of connection to his community. He was invited to play for his rural school singsongs. On these occasions the whole school gathered together and participated in a group sing-a-long of familiar songs while Roger accompanied them on the piano. He continued to play piano later in life for his church community. When he went to boarding school as a teenager he was near the RCMP training depot and he remembered going out of his way to be able to hear the RCMP band play. His interest in bands continued as his life progressed, and when his own daughters participated in their school band programs his interest was once again piqued. As an adult in the workplace, a fellow employee invited him to come to an adult beginner band that had started up in the city where he lived. Roger was fifty years old when he first played a wind instrument. He began on the saxophone, moved to trumpet, and as he explored new ensembles he went on to find his match with the bass trombone and the tuba. He now refers to tuba as his “daily driver.” The tuba now serves as Roger’s main motivator, defining his role and connecting him with ensembles that use low brass instruments. Although he did not begin playing in a wind band until mid-life, Roger has now been playing for over twenty-five years. Roger’s early connection with his community through fulfilling a musical role has

expanded with his wind band experience and has brought many opportunities for connecting with people of all ages. Playing in a wind band has become a passion for Roger:

Well, you know, like I said, I turned 76 yesterday, and ah, I'm starting to not do some of the things that I've been doing for a long time...But I'm not going to give up the music. I expect I'll keep up with the music longer than I will with the motorbike. – Roger

Carter. Carter is a self-described “farm-boy” also from a rural background. When he was a boy there was no school band program in his rural community so a group of dedicated parents formed a community band, hired an instructor, and organized all the moving parts to make the opportunity available to their children. In 1961 and at the age of nine, Carter began playing trumpet in a lower level band. He progressed to the senior band until he was sent to boarding school for high school. Like Roger, Carter was sent to boarding school for high school. There was no band program available at the boarding school and his trumpet career took a twenty-four year hiatus until Carter's wife noticed an insert in the city newspaper advertising an adult band. She suggested that he could use a “diversion” from their home with five children, and that began his now twenty-four year involvement in adult community band. For Carter, playing in a wind band has most notably provided a healthy cognitive challenge, social connection, and emotional benefits:

Well it's, it's something worthwhile. Music is universal. Everybody can understand or listen to music. So that's one. And it's fun and challenging at times, and I think that those are the primary reasons. It gets me out of the house and doing something that I normally wouldn't do. I mean I've been doing it for twenty years now. – Carter

Steven. Steven grew up in a rural Ukrainian community. His father, who “didn't play a note of music,” felt music was important for his children. Steven began playing the piano at the

age of five. He continued through Grade 10 Royal Conservatory and worked on his Associate of the Royal Conservatory of Toronto (ARTC) designation, driving several hours each way to the nearest city to study with a particular teacher. When he broke his hand in hockey his piano teacher was not impressed that Steven was playing a high-risk sport at a high performance level and, as a result, his piano career ended.

Steven played alto and then baritone saxophone in his school band and had a high level of ability and commitment. He attended summer camps, was part of the provincial honour band, toured with band, and played in competitions and festivals. When he started university he played for part of a year in a wind ensemble before stopping. After coaching at high level for over two decades, Steven retired from this activity. It was at this point that he remembered how much he enjoyed playing the saxophone. It was this past connection to playing that led him through the doors of a music store “so I walked into the wind ensemble after having a saxophone for two weeks and I figured out it was about 38 years between band practices [laughs].” Playing in a band over the last two years has had important emotional and cognitive benefits for Steven and has provided opportunities for the kind of growth and well-being that can result from a sense of personal accomplishment. Steven shared a coaching strategy, “embrace the little wins,” as a piece of personal wisdom. This life lesson has been valuable to him because in his life things have not always gone well and he had to work through them. Whereas the big wins experienced in sports were easy to celebrate, he noted that giving attention to “little wins” provided a way of coping with life’s ongoing challenges. For him, playing in a wind band was a plentiful source of “little wins” and in this way, a plentiful source of positive moments that contribute to his health and well-being:

In the band, you don't have to reach to go looking for [little wins]. They happen. You know, "Yeah, boy we hit that note," everybody hit that note at the right time and we ended at the right time. And the emotion that the composer wanted us to feel we felt. And so you don't have to really go looking for it or hide that, you'll just go, "Ok, that worked." You know? – Steven

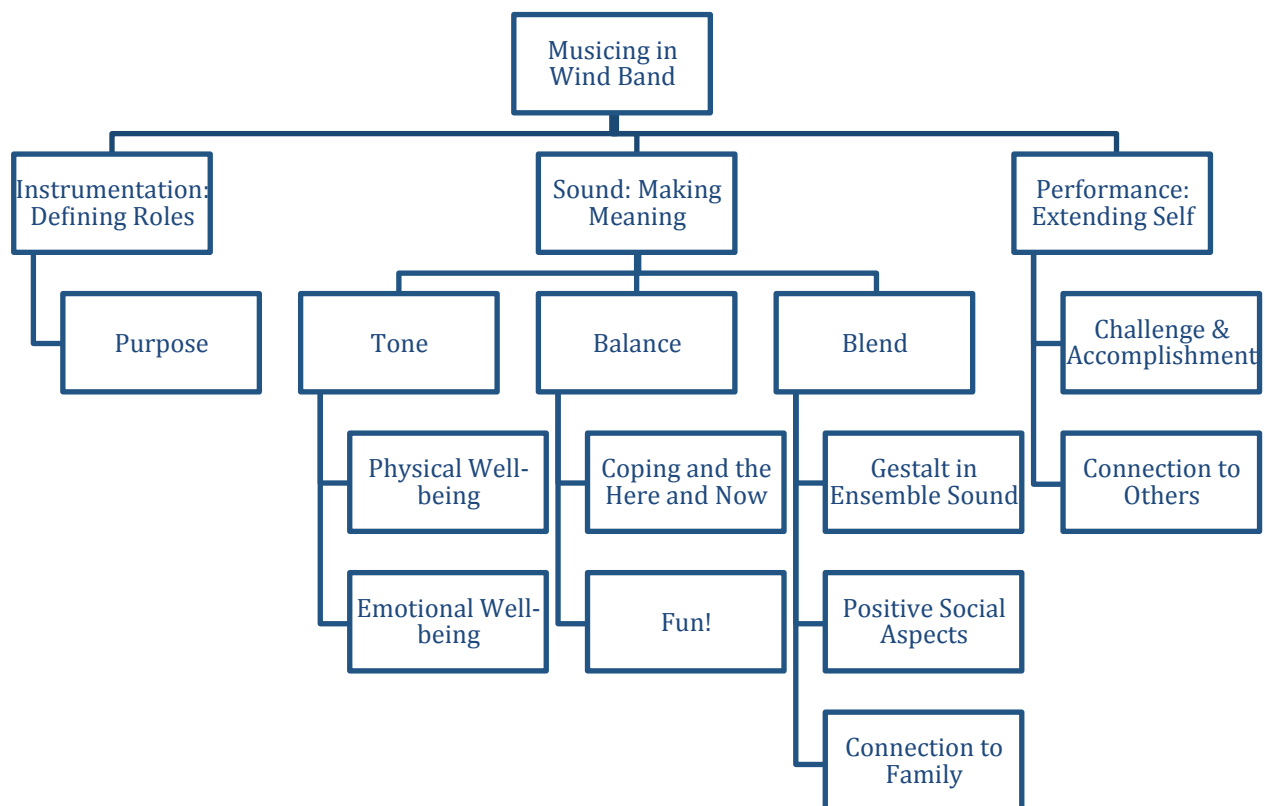
Charles. Charles is the only participant who grew up in the city and who has played continuously across his life without a gap of many years between youth and playing as an older adult. He began piano at age eight and continued until he received his Grade 8 Royal Conservatory. He still plays piano often and enjoys the multiple lines you can play at one time on this instrument. He sang in school and church choir as a child until the demands of hockey took precedence. He began to play the trumpet at age ten with the city community band, in his school band, and through private lessons. He remembered his trumpet teacher fondly as a fan of Mexican virtuoso trumpet soloist Raphael Mendez and as a teacher who made lessons fun. Charles continued to play trumpet in high school band and moved into playing in a pep band and jazz band at the university he attended. Although he did not major in music, he had the opportunity to play in the university jazz band. As he described it, "just to be part of a group like that and make it sound like we could, I mean, that was tremendous." As an adult Charles continued his music making in bands both in Europe – where an informal group of work colleagues met to play local functions - and back in Canada where he joined an adult community band. He has participated in various groups ever since. Making music in an ensemble has been an important source of social connection and has specifically impacted his mental health and well-being by adding richness to his life. "There's a lot of people who don't have any interests, I think, and I can't imagine them having as full a life as I think I do." For Charles, playing trumpet

in a wind band has added fullness to his life that he values highly. When Charles, was asked if he would continue to play in band after his upcoming retirement, he said:

Absolutely. I'll probably play in that band until I can't breathe and have no teeth or something like that. I intend to play in that band until I die, or a band. My wife is European and so we will be living there off and on. I've got two things; I'm looking for a road bike route for my road bike and for a band when I'm there. – Charles

Health in the Winds Themes

Figure 1 represents the themes that resulted from thematic analysis represented in a vocative manner using metaphor.



Instrumentation: Defining Roles

Instrumentation refers to the set of instruments that make up the ensemble. The distribution of brass, woodwind, treble, alto, tenor, and bass instruments defines the overall sound of the ensemble. This collective potential also guides the selection of music that the group has available to them. Instrumentation creates fundamental conditions for music making. If there are two rows of flute players and no tuba, balance will be a major battle for the group and the conductor. A large saxophone section can dominate the sound of a group and too few trumpet players may mean that the three lines that comprise the harmony will not be present. Each player's instrument is unique in its role in the ensemble on multiple levels: within each musical line, within each section, and within the group as a whole. Across a lifespan a person experiences many different roles that also function on multiple levels: within ourselves, within our families, within our communities. These roles guide actions and organize time, and in doing so, create a sense of purpose, a sense of why we do what we do.

Purpose. Playing in a wind band requires musicians to fill roles beyond individual work on their instrument. Ensemble musicians must know where their instrument fits in the music itself and the ensemble as a whole. These multiple roles create a musical sense of purpose and give additional meaning to the music making. Roger's tuba playing has given him a unique role as anchor of the bass line in music. This role is important to the other musicians in the ensembles where he plays:

The people from the Band they say, "oh, man that is wonderful. We have to have that tuba you know, and if you're not here," you know the few times I've been away, "and the band just doesn't work when you're not here." And when the drummer's not there, they listen for me. And the clarinet people up on the, to my left, up at the front, they're the,

they say you know, “we listen for that, we count on it, it’s important,” and ah, so it’s a great feeling of confidence.

This confidence is also connected to a sense of purpose for Roger. When he was not there to contribute his part to the bass line, his absence was felt by the other musicians. When they expressed how much his absence was noted Roger felt “just a great feeling of accomplishment, and achievement, and belonging and ah, you know I need to be there because I’m important! [laughs].”

The tuba has also given Roger purpose through the opportunity to mentor several young people learning to play the tuba by giving them lessons, an experience he described as “a nice feeling.” Roger recalled one concert in particular, stating:

This guy come up to me and he says, “do you mind if my son sits beside you here because he’s starting to play tuba in school, and he wants to sit beside someone who knows how to play one?” I said “fine.” The little boy sat there for half an hour and then he got bored and wandered off, but you know, that kind of stuff is really good feedback.

Steven found that playing in an ensemble provided a goal to work towards. At the beginning of the year, the conductor of his ensemble hands out twenty pieces and expects players to learn their individual parts at home. This expectation of individual practice has motivated Steven to move beyond fatigue and inertia at the end of a day. When commenting on individual practicing at home Steven noted:

It’s a discipline thing as far as, you know, okay, I’ve got to get that one in practice. There are many evenings when you’re going, “oh, cripes,” you know? You think, on your way, ‘cause I’ve got the basement set up as a music area and I think, “Ah,” it’s a chore going

down the stairs but within a few minutes of getting down the stairs and playing it's not a chore. It's a chore leaving it after that, and I love ending the day playing music.

His musical role in the ensemble has ignited his practice and, as a result, he experiences pleasure at the end of his day:

My day doesn't end often until 9:00 at night now, instead of sitting down and watching TV, I actually started going down and playing the piano or the saxophone again. That kind of is starting to tie it back together, but I really enjoy using that piece of the brain for a couple of hours a week and then, just the practice.

Charles and Carter both found that playing in an ensemble with weekly rehearsals gave structure to their weeks. Carter echoed Steven's comment regarding evening inertia, noting that "physically I guess it gets you out and doing things instead of sitting at home, motivates you to do things." Said Charles: "Well you know, you kind of look forward to it. It's something that you can look forward to on a Monday night, and like I said, it's a diversion [laughs]".

Sound: Making Meaning

In music, sound is the currency. Without sound that is worth listening to, music is without meaning. A conductor considers ensemble sound – the combination of all the instruments integrated into one aural medium – as the palette from which the music is derived. Three elements shape and colour the ensemble sound: tone, balance, and blend. A mindful conductor attends to each element in a fluid continuum as the music and the performers interact in real time and sound is created. Making meaning out of the joys and struggles of life also requires attention to multiple aspects of the body, mind and spirit. As a musician, the three elements of sound hold numerous benefits for our overall health and well-being.

Tone. Tone is defined as “any sound considered with reference to its quality, pitch, strength, source, etc.” (Avis, Drysdale, Gregg, Neufeldt & Scargill, 1983, p. 1182). Canadian conductor and author Shelley Jagow (2007) underscored its importance, saying that “tonal value is worth its weight in gold! Quality tone must serve as the solid foundation for the development of further musical fundamentals and advanced musical skill” (p. 34).

Physical well-being. Creating tone on a wind instrument requires physical exertion to hold the instrument, to fill it with air, and to produce a sound through the mouthpiece or head joint. For Roger, playing the tuba has direct physical benefits related to being active and using his body and posture to influence his sense of alertness:

I'll start off with the physical and that is really good for me. Well first off I have to sit up. It's not like I can slouch back here and watch television and go to sleep. I have to sit up, I have to be physically and mentally alert, so posture is important. And I play a big instrument; tuba's a heavy big club. And you know you've got to figure out how you're going to manage this, so I'm handling this big instrument, and I've got to practice, I've got to carry it to the practices and carry it home, you know? It's a four-valve Imperial E-flat tuba in a case. Don't walk up stairs with one if you can help it.

The sheer physicality of playing a large instrument like the tuba has required Roger to build strength. This has acted as a motivating factor for Roger to work on his physical health outside of playing music:

But it was really good because you've got to move that air. And in the course of a concert I'll move a room full of air, not very high pressure, but I move that room full of air, so that takes a lot of physical work. You know and I go to the weight room at YWCA two or three times a week, and I do pedal bike, and I do rowing machines, and occasionally I'll

try the elliptical, and walking in the gym and so on. 'Cause I think you've got to be physically fit to play this thing. And I need to be physically fit to drive a motorbike too, so that's also demanding. So physically, it's really been helpful for me, in terms of posture, and muscle tone, and coordination, and all these things.

Roger also plays the trombone so he has two large instruments to transport. He addressed the possible physical barrier of carrying his instruments in a proactive way:

I bought one of those little folding cart, two wheel carts, and that helps carry my tuba. You know somebody had it for sale for twenty bucks so I went and bought. I said that's exactly what I need; I can carry my tuba on it. But playing [adult] band now is a bit of a stinker for things because I play tuba in one band and trombone in the other so I've got to take two instruments to the rehearsal. And now we're playing in that corner of the school instead of over in the band hall and so we park right beside that door, and I go, I go early enough so that I park right beside that door and I can take my two instruments in and out quite easily, two trips.

Steven found the challenge of playing the tenor saxophone in an ensemble with other musicians a motivating factor for working on fine motor skills that have become more difficult with aging joints:

We're playing with players that often play with the symphony and that, you know, play with other gigs and other genres around town and so then you think, okay, I have to be able to play like that. And so you work on your stiff old fingers and the limp old embouchure to get there.

Steven also commented that the breath necessary to play a tenor saxophone has led to a noticeable physical change in his ability to project his voice:

I think in the last two years I'm able to project my voice better and I've got more wind, and it's just a function, you're blowing a tenor saxophone. You can't only use a quarter of your lungs or you'll be gasping for air all the way through it and so I think it does help, sort of, cardio-vascular wise it does that.

Furthermore, Steven's arousal state was affected by playing music:

Well you come out feeling fresh. You feel a lot fresher, a lot more relaxed, and I do think that I sleep better. Of course the adrenalin after a concert or a band practice, it's hard to sleep, you know, because of the adrenalin. But adrenalin eventually disappears.... Then there's a nice crash and you go to sleep. Adrenalin's a great drug. You know everybody does all these other drugs. Just get into stuff and become an adrenalin junkie.

Both ends of the arousal spectrum – from heightened, adrenalin-driven experience to relaxation leading to better sleep – were physical benefits for Steven.

Charles found playing an instrument a motivating factor for being generally active. For him, “physically I guess it gets you out and doing things instead of sitting at home, motivates you to do things. I guess that would be a physical aspect of it.”

Emotional well-being. The creation of tone on an instrument is a unique, personal experience mediated by person, situation, and the instrument itself. Ludwig van Beethoven (n.d.) said that “music is the mediator between the spiritual and the sensual life” (retrieved from <http://www.quotegarden.com/music.html>); for musicians, a primary vehicle for this transaction is tone. Filling a wind instrument with breath to create resonance that results in tone is a deeply

connective experience, intertwining the player's breath with the instrument's characteristic sound be it deep, low and resonant like a tuba, or powerful and bright like a trumpet.

Peter chose the flute as his first instrument because of its sound. As a youth he worked long hours on his family farm to earn enough money to purchase a quality instrument that could produce a beautiful tone:

I bought a solid silver Armstrong and it was gorgeous. I could never hit low C ever on my Normandy [first instrument] and I thought I was doing something wrong and I tried every incarnation of an embouchure you could possibly come up with and I could never get a low C period, let alone a nice low C. One of the very, very first things I did with my new flute, I put it together and one of the very first things I did was blow a low C and it was just, penetrated my soul.

This new instrument “had become for me far more for me than just a musical instrument; it was a symbol of me making a mature choice when I was immature and having the lifelong rewards of that decision.” When asked about any strong memories where playing in a band impacted his health and well-being, Peter spoke about an experience he had playing “Taps” on his flute to a group of Air Cadet students at summer camp:

I was standing up on the balcony, overlooking all these bunk beds, 600 kids there so there was some ruckus going on, stuff like that, and I started to play. And, you could hear the silence progressing across the barracks as they started listening to the music and none of them had ever heard “Taps” played on a flute before. And as I [tears up] interesting, more powerful memory than I thought, as those last notes of “Taps” floated, it was silence...Woah... And to be able to silence a hangar of 600 kids with a flute, a lot of it was just it was an anomaly and they'd never heard something like that before, but, and

because of my response tonight, which kind of surprised me because I didn't realize it made that much difference, but it was a very powerful thing. And not that it empowered me, it just made me appreciate the power of the beauty of the sound, and it had nothing to do with me generating the sound. It had to do with the power of the music. I don't know if I'm making any sense here, but, I didn't matter, music mattered. And to hear the silence spread out as people listened to that, it was remarkable to be able to see something like that and to participate in something like that.

In this memory, the tone of Peter's instrument, his connection in creating it, and its impact on those around him was felt so deeply that he was moved to tears in the interview. His role as creator of sound allowed him to be part of a significant experience with the beauty of sound and this he recalled as a story of well-being.

When Roger was asked what about the act of playing made him feel better, he also noted a deeply emotional reaction related specifically to the tone he created on his trombone when playing "The Last Post:"

Roger: And when you play it with the trombone, it takes it down, lower, it's an octave lower. And, well what I do, I have a bunch of cousins who were in the war, and I think of my cousin Charlie on Juno beach with the bullets whizzing past him, and he was in the first or second wave of Juno beach. So I think of Charlie when I play it [voice chokes softly].

Interviewer: Yeah, and then that emotion just comes through there.

Roger: Yeah, and the feedback has been like that too. They say, “We’ve never heard it like that, never heard it played that way.” I slow it down, I play it slow, and then I speed it up, I slow it down, I get louder, I get softer.

Interviewer: Sounds beautiful

Roger: It is, it’s just really quite amazing. And it’s just you know, playing the same notes as everybody else you just do it a little differently. So that that does a lot for me, to be able to do that.

Roger’s experience of creating tone gave him a sense of connection to others: one through memories of family that manifested as emotion in the sound and another through connection with his audience. These experiences gave him a sense of identity in that it was his creation that had and has been meaningful for others. This is a feeling that he values.

Charles described his reaction to a “great sound” in the full ensemble as “tremendous,” giving him “just a very content, satisfied, euphoric feeling. It’s just a very good feeling.” He felt that playing music affected his mental health, both through the act of making music as well as what playing has added to his ability to listen deeply to music:

I listen to music in a different way too. I’m pretty sure I listen to it differently than someone that I work with that doesn’t play. I find that sometimes I don’t listen to the tune, I listen to what is going on in the background. I have a feeling that I listen to it because I’m looking for something different, other than what’s on the top, the obvious, which is probably the melody. So I just wanted to add that.

For Charles, the knowledge learned by playing extends his enjoyment of music listening and this experience has been a decidedly positive one:

It's something that you look forward to doing, it's something you like to do and because I play I like to listen. One of the best things for me is a Saturday morning or a Sunday morning. I listen to the French CBC, they have fabulous classical programming on Sunday morning, choral music on Sunday mornings on CBC as well, to sit at the lake and flip through some magazines or newspapers, some kind of light reading, that is just a fabulous experience.

Balance. Balance in a wind ensemble is achieved when two or more sounds combine to create a complimentary sound (Jagow, 2007). In rehearsal and performance, the conductor is responsible for adjusting balance as music is being made in real time. This ranges from using non-verbal gestures in conducting to verbally asking for a little more or a little less from sections or lines. When an ensemble is out of balance, the quality of sound and musical clarity suffer. When an ensemble plays with good balance it is the result of intentional attention to the sound and, as a result, the unique elements of the musical composition can be heard. A life out of balance also lacks quality and clarity. Balance is not an end result or an achievement, but an active state of intentional work to be maintained in the flow of everyday life. Balance contributes to health and well-being in a fundamental way by providing the ability to cope with the challenges of life.

Coping and the here and now. The participants in this study of older adults have significant life experience and, as a result, many have experienced difficulty, pain, and times when their lives were out of balance. Themes of coping through playing music in an ensemble

include experiences with illness and divorce and as well as with everyday adult stressors like work and caring for others.

When Roger was diagnosed with prostate cancer and in treatment, “depression is what hit me you know; I’d go home and pull the blanket over my head and cry.” After being told it would take a year to see a psychiatrist he did spend a brief time with a social worker but struggled with depression. His role in the band was his reason for getting up and out into the world:

But I kept up the band stuff. And in the fall we had two or three gigs at Oktoberfest, and weddings and I was playing in Barry’s band at that time, so, you know, you gotta go.

And so you can’t hide under a blanket when you’ve got to play in a band.

When asked what about playing made him feel better, Roger responded with:

Well, you’ve gotta translate those ink spots on that page into music. Your brain has to do that, so you don’t have time to do these other things. You know, if I’m, if I’m playing along and say I’m familiar, I’ve played this piece a hundred times before so I don’t have to even think about it, my fingers will just automatically do it. And then I get lost [laughs]. Get lost on “Happy Wanderer,” of all things, so you have to keep your attention focused on what you’re doing and these other things you can’t let them interfere. And it tells me that I don’t have to be depressed, I don’t have to feel this way, I don’t have to pull a blanket over my head, cry, it’s ok to do that once in a while, but don’t let it catch you....It’s alright to be sick, don’t let it get ahold of you, you gotta get out, and the music is one thing that would do it. And what else would I do? You know, I’m not into bowling or golf or anything like that you know I gave them up when I got into music, I gave up old guy hockey, I gave up bowling, I gave up golf, because the music was so much more fun [laughs].

Steven credits playing music as saving his “mental sanity” when he was going through a separation from his wife:

It was something that I could focus on. I find when you have to play you can't have other things in your head, and if you do you mess up. So, it was a way for an hour, hour and a half every night where I could go to a place where, I've got a reasonable high stress job and then what was going on in my world, so I could go to a place where I couldn't think about all that and give my brain a rest. And, exercise a piece of my brain that I hadn't used in a long, long time.

Both Roger and Steven mentioned the healthful benefit they experienced engaging in music making because the ability to play required their full attention. This experience of full attention is a way of focusing on the here and now, a key piece of mindfulness practice. As Steven described it:

Steven: Well it, it's a good exercise for, I think it's a good exercise for multi-tasking. But, focused multi-tasking 'cause you're doing a bunch of stuff for an end, so that everybody ends on concert C, at the same time [laughs]. You know? So you go through all this, I was describing to a friend who doesn't play music, I says, you go through all this conflagration for about 8 minutes and then everyone ends up on one note [snaps]. And I said there's a whole bunch of stuff that happens and it feels really good when everybody ends up on that one note, as you know, being a musician. But it does help when you get back, for me there's two ways that it helped. Number one I stopped thinking about work and I stopped thinking about other things, I just, I have to focus on this, which I believe gives your brain an opportunity to reset...it just gives you a rest. It's a reset. And so then when you come out of that world and back into the other pieces of the world, sometimes

a fresh idea will pop up and stuff like that. And then the other thing is just the mental exercise of playing in a band.

Carter described experiencing the here and now while playing music as, “you’re more concentrated on the job at hand than the other things in your life right at the moment.” This, he says, is “good for you”:

You don’t really think about much other than what you’re doing and playing the music and I think that’s probably a good thing for you, taking your mind off some of the other things that are running through it on a day-to-day basis. So, you’re concentrating on doing your performing in playing. I think that that is probably one of the benefits and one of things that I like about it. And it’s probably good for you just to do something different.

For Peter, the concentration required in band rehearsals is a source of joy and a something that has helped him cope with stress:

It doesn’t matter how crappy a day I’ve had. It doesn’t matter how much stress I’m under at work, when I sit in that room I have got to focus on what I’m doing....And I can basically turn the world off. I’m not that proficient a musician that I can just play automatically. I do have to concentrate on what I am doing and I find that it is something that brings me a lot of joy and helps me deal with a lot of stress and helps me walk away from my world for three hours once a week.

As a coping strategy for dealing with difficult things in life, Peter noted that playing music is a healthy coping mechanism:

And the nice part about it is in contrast to some of the other things that I have done in my life to escape from reality, it’s legal! [laughs] and not, I can’t say it’s not addictive but

there's no law against it, some of the other things that I've done for a recreational activity, maybe not so much so. [laughing] Nobody cares if you're driving under the influence of music.

Playing in a band has helped Peter balance his busy family life with personal time:

There are very few things in my life that I do for me. I work, I raised a family, done the things that you do, chased the kids around at soccer practices, band concerts and stuff like that. Band is my time.

Steven found that playing music was beneficial for him in two settings, both at home in individual practice and in the group setting of rehearsal. In individual practice he noted that, "you have to be in the moment. You can't be, and I can tell when my mind wanders because it's not as much fun and things start to drop. And you sort of stop." In this way, playing acted as a real-time monitor for his level of concentration and ability to be in the here and now. Individual practicing at home also affected Steven's personal sense of internal balance. He reported that a result of practice is the ability to think about old issues in a new way. This, in turn, helped with balancing his personal life and work stress:

You can go down [the stairs to practice], you know within the first few minutes you sort of you get into the moment and then you stay there for an hour, hour and a half, and then, when you come out of it, the rest of the stuff starts piling into your brain again but I think it stacks up differently.

In the group setting of rehearsal he experienced a sense of release from the stress of everyday life, including work and personal struggles:

In my job I have [many] employees, various managers, and things reporting to me. You know, we've got a [multi-]million dollar budget, we have all this stuff happening around,

and it's great. I love my job, it's the best gig [of its kind] in probably western Canada, you know, managing this [place], but, it's really nice to take a break from that, you know? 'Cause you could work thirty hours a day if you wanted to. You know, and you just never really put it away? You shut the computer off but there's things that go on in your brain, and when you go through some personal strife, that's, you know, when you're working, your personal strife sort of invades your space. When you're going through personal strife your work kind of invades your personal space. But music is the one thing that neither of those two can come into or it screws up. So if you're playing and you start thinking about the [employee] that screwed up and you have to deal with that tomorrow, then the music falls apart and you might as well not be playing. Or, vice versa, personal stuff starts to come in, everything falls apart. So it's great. It's a great release.

Fun. Participants also experienced release and positive emotional benefits from the fun they had while playing music. Roger noted:

Roger: You know we play at seniors' homes and they just love us.

Interviewer: Fantastic,

Roger: Yeah, lots of fun!

Peter admitted that playing the trombone has been a key factor for his participation in some mischief:

And I discovered the truth about the trombone is it's a blast! ... With trombone you're kind of back behind the music stand and you're not quite as close, and you're in with a different type of people 'cause you're getting pretty close to the percussion section and in

with the rest of the brass players and there's a tendency for that whole group to be a little bit more rowdy and a little bit more out there, and you can torment people with your slide. Generally speaking you end up sitting behind some woodwind players and if you play your cards right and have a compatriot and you can clear your spit valve as the other one's taking their water bottle and spraying them on the neck and they go, "Ewww!" and it's great! I did this as an adult!

Peter's personal identification with the brass section and his recruitment of a "compatriot" speaks to both a sense of fun and of belonging for him in band. Peter's sense of wonder that he did these things as an adult suggested he surprised himself with these youthful antics and that surprise was a positive one.

Charles enthusiastically described being part of a good ensemble as, "it was really fun!" Fun also played a part in one of his key memories of playing in an adult band:

Then we played "The Stripper," and [the conductor] had a tuxedo on because it's a coming out party and [he] had his tux on. So he's flipping his tails and before you know, he's taking off his jacket and flipping things, and the crowd was going crazy! It was same kind of feeling that I had like, "Man!" All these parts that were hard to play, you know the high notes... it was just so much more fun to play! That really stands out in my mind as one of my greatest band experiences.

In this memory the conductor's playful approach to engaging the audience elevated Charles' enjoyment to the point where he was able to move past the challenges of playing his part to fully experiencing the joy of the moment.

Blend. In wind ensemble sound, blend is when "two or more tones merge with one another to achieve a unity of sound" (Jagow, 2007, p. 46). For the conductor, blend is analogous

to zooming out on the lens of a camera to see the broader picture. In ensemble, blend requires consideration of the sound in its entirety. Timbre can be adjusted to bring new colours into the collective sound, but it is in combining these sound elements that the whole is created. For individual people blend is experienced in connection with others. This sense of belonging and connection with others can both eliminate our awareness of self in relation to a group and heighten our sense of self as the feeling of connection to others deepens.

Gestalt in ensemble sound. Several participants in this study remarked on their internal experiences when playing music with an ensemble. Specifically they noted the experience of losing their individual part into the whole of the ensemble sound. There was a shared sense that the whole was greater than the sum of its parts; this, in turn, provided emotional benefit to them. In psychology, gestalt refers to “the total structure or pattern of various acts, experiences and elements so integrated as to constitute a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts” (Avis et al., 1983, p. 494). Peter described this feeling as “nailing it” when he spoke of the emotional lift following a successful performance by the band:

Once in a while a group of people comes together and plays better than they should be able to. It's called hitting it, or nailing it. We nailed it. And it was the first time that the band had performed and we were all suffering from various forms of performance anxiety. 'Cause even as adults you get nervous. When we came off stage the buzz that was amongst the members of the group, and I kind of just sit back for a moment and I tried to be more of an observer and I thought, “This is really cool.” Here's a bunch of adults, like here's a group of people that cut through the entire spectrum like any of the adult band programs do, from people that were still actively working to people that are retired to professionals, labourers, you know, the teeming masses represented in this little

microcosm. If there was an endorphin meter it would have been interesting to take the endorphin levels of the people that came off stage because we nailed it.

Charles recalled a key musical memory from childhood as one where, “I was a part of this great sound and I was a part of it. I wasn’t the best player but I was a part of it.” As an adult in wind band, he had a similar experience when, as the ensemble coalesced around a particular piece, he experienced an internal sense that he could play beyond his previous level:

Charles: You know it’s just a...just being part of it...and the piece as you’re playing it, it almost seems easier, you get into the part more if you’re having fun, and it’s going well, and playing a piece like “Sing, Sing, Sing,” it’s a very fun piece to play.

Interviewer: So with that experience was it the audience’s reaction to “Sing, Sing, Sing,” or was it your connection to that?

Charles: I think it was just the way our band was playing. We were cooking.

Interviewer: You were cooking! That’s right, in the pocket.

Charles: Yes,

Interviewer: What does that feel like when you’re playing along and then all of a sudden you’re in the pocket with the group?

Charles: Oh, it feels great! Yeah, you feel that, “Oh, I can play anything now and we’re really cooking here.” You play a little louder maybe, and you have to be careful of course because the conductor’s like, don’t get carried away, but then you do. Especially as a trumpet player, louder is always better.

Charles took risks with his playing, extending his musical effort as a result of being part of an ensemble that was “cooking.” This gave him a highly positive emotional reaction to both the music itself and the sense that he could move beyond his own limits.

When asked to clarify what he enjoyed about playing in ensemble versus practicing by himself, Steven noted:

The fact that you have to weave all that together even through you only have one line. You still have to be part of the whole ensemble and be in the right place at the right time, and it’s actually, I find it really funny to be out of sync. Funny in a weird way. [The director’s] commented that he knows when I’m out of sync because I’m sitting there chuckling. And then you find your way back and you’re OK.

For Steven, both the experiences of blending with the ensemble and his reaction to the challenge of blending unsuccessfully were activities that provided enjoyment to him:

And then, just the whole exercising that part of your brain that you just don’t use. You don’t use your music, your band part of your brain, as much anywhere but sitting in that chair in the middle of 35 people who are all doing their own thing trying to get to the same place. And I think that’s really great. It’s great brain exercise and I’m glad I’m back into it.

When playing at a Christmas event for his church, Roger was part of an ensemble that included children from the congregation. In this band he supported the young musicians by

adjusting his playing to highlight them, “we weren’t there to show-off how good we were, we were there to make the kids look good.” Roger described intentionally blending his sound with one young girl in particular to help with the overall performance, “and so I, I played it low so that her French horn would come out and you know we made the kids sound good? [laughs] And the feedback from the people that were there was really very, very positive.” Roger’s musical blending brought him a sense of personal satisfaction. It also elicited positive feedback from others who were there to listen and this contributed to that satisfaction. The social benefits of playing in a wind ensemble are further explicated in the next section.

Positive social aspects. Being part of a band provides opportunity for connection with others, both within the ensemble and outside the ensemble as music serves as a vehicle for connecting with community. Seventy-six-year-old Roger’s musical participation in his church setting and through band offered him numerous opportunities to connect with people of all ages, “we’re very welcoming to young people and ah, you want to play with the [Cultural Heritage] Band, you know you’ll get along!” Playing an instrument has been a way for Roger to connect with a wide variety of people from across the country as he searched to purchase new instruments, researching the history of the instruments he had found and exchanging instruments within the community of tuba players in the city. When describing this journey he noted joyfully, “you meet a lot of interesting people [laughs].” He described one of the bands he currently plays in as a social group:

So we go over there Thursday nights, we’ve got a key to get in, nobody is there, it’s all to us, it’s a nice hall, parking is easy, no stairs to climb up or down, we’ve got a little storage space for the things we want to leave, we can use the church hall for our coffee breaks and it’s just wonderful. And we have a wonderful time in our social group.

[laughs]....And ah, then all these gigs we play too. Saturday we go to this town, we play for the parade, we've got a concert afterwards, and we go to this popular venue and we play before the play a couple times a year, and we go to seniors' homes, and it's just a big social group... and half of us are over seventy!

Roger also found that playing his instrument was a way to connect with the group of seniors living in his housing complex. His wife organized a Remembrance Day service for their condo where he played the "Last Post." To the surprise of both he and his wife, fifty people came to the service. Not only did the turn out surprise them, but the positive reaction by the attendees was also a surprise. When describing the general social environment of his senior's complex Roger noted, "there's some people there that, ah you know they complain about everything." In response to the service these same people said, "Oh! This is wonderful. [laughs]...Yeah, music is a great healer of many things." Roger's musical contribution unexpectedly created a place for positive connection with neighbours in his senior complex.

When asked how playing in wind band related to his health and well-being, Charles' first response involved the social aspect of the activity. He noted, "just like I say, the social part. It's always a group of very nice people to be around." Carter referred to the collective experience of sharing a common interest and "the camaraderie",

We haven't really done any road trips lately but when we were doing that I thought, "You know, this is really amazing. The group of us out on the bus going to do something like this." The thought of us was quite amazing. It's a common interest and you are doing it together.

For Steven, a performance created a point of connection beyond his personal sense of satisfaction for a job well done. He described a subtle sense of recognition between the band members for one another's contributions:

Steven: I think musicians, we don't jump up and high five. We just sort of quietly go, [nods] "Yeah, that went [well]... We'll never do that again but boy that worked out"... 'Cause it's a real. There's a chemical thing that happens I believe, that lets you know that you did well.

Interviewer: Internally or between people?

Steven: I think between and internally. I think as an ensemble to know things went well. And I think just as myself, I just know. It's just a really relaxing, it's a good emotion that a person has.

A unique aspect of social connection through playing in a band that came to light through this study was the idea of social connection at arm's length, or from a safe social distance. Carter noted that,

It's just the whole thing of getting a bunch of people together to do something like that. That's the other thing that amazes me. You know you get a bunch of older people together to do things like that...I mean you chit chat and whatever but I wouldn't say that any of them are my real good friends. They're acquaintances and you chit chat with them.

Peter found this limited closeness to other band members was part of finding a healthy way to leave everyday stressors behind:

I can interact with a bunch of other adults but I don't have to get too close and too personal with them. We're not there to visit; we're there to play. So you can be, not quite a hermit, but you can be there and just get lost in the music and they're there for the same reasons.

Charles noted that if he could find a band in Europe to join after retirement it would enable him to connect with new people without the pressure of having to find something to talk about:

I'd meet a whole new group of people, not that I'm a really social person because I'm very happy by myself too, but it is a great way to meet a new group of people too... Um, if it wasn't for the music I suppose then I'd have to find interesting things to talk about, and music, well, I play my horn. I think it probably has something to do with that.

In this way, making music in an ensemble provides a sense of being connected to others that extends beyond potential barriers to social settings such as the ability to make conversation or feeling pressured to share personal information. Playing in an ensemble can be a non-intimidating way to make social connections.

Connection to family. An intimate experience of blending – that is, the merging of two to become one unified whole– is to see each individual in the context of those closest to him, namely, his family and his family history. Participants in this study found that playing an instrument was a form of connection to their family history, as well as an investment in their present family relationships.

When looking back on his childhood, Peter realized the amount of effort his family went to in order for him to play music as a youth:

It was a bit of a stretch for us as a family financially, which I didn't understand at the time. I, I, I didn't see the impact that it would have on trying to afford to buy me a musical instrument. I was just interested in music. Not necessarily in music I was interested in playing in a band.

Music was a priority in his family's household. Peter credited his mother's love of American trombonist and Big Band Era bandleader Tommy Dorsey as the reason he chose the trombone as an adult. He had vivid memories of this musical influence:

So I mean, here I was in my 30s and had spent a hundred bucks on a trombone and had to learn to read bass clef music, but it was for me, a gateway to playing big band music and more important to me to play big band music than jazz. To this day there is still some jazz music that I just don't get. I will always get big band music. It's something that I grew up listening to it. The old record player that I talked about? My mom had some old '78 Bakelite, pre-vinyl, the old Bakelite records. She had a collection of Tommy Dorsey music that actually looked like a hard-cover book and you open this up and there's beautiful blue cover and there's a picture of Tommy Dorsey embossed on it, and you open this hard cover up and there were five sleeves in there, not the 13 ½ inch discs but the 9 ½ or 10 inch diameter disc. There were slots for five of them. One had been broken so we actually only had four of the five, but I used to listen to those and I mean Dorsey was legendary and he has such a distinct sound. Just spoke so eloquently through his trombone and so I'm sure that had a great influence on my decision to play trombone.

As he moved along in life and became a father himself, his daughter, "expressed some interest in getting involved and liked the sound of the flute." Peter's flute holds great meaning for him and it was significant that he offered it to his daughter:

As long as you take very good care of it, 'cause there's a story behind the flute. I will let you play my flute and see if it is something you're interested in and if it is then we may consider getting you your own flute.

Peter described his intention for his daughter as an opportunity:

The opportunity for her to perhaps find the same solace in music that I found but the risk that she would not take care of the instrument was a struggle for me. It had value well beyond the value of the instrument. There was so much of what made me tick tied up in it. She did take extraordinarily good care of it. She understood how valuable it was and also found a great deal of pleasure.

Through his daughter's care and use of his special instrument Peter provided her with the opportunity to play a wind instrument and to connect with his personal history.

Charles also highly valued giving his daughters the opportunity to play music. When his daughter expressed an interest in playing the trumpet he quit his own brass band to support her interest. Together they joined an ensemble as a father-daughter team and played in the group for two years. Charles described the satisfaction of connecting his daughters with an instrument as something that has contributed to his personal sense of well-being. He stated:

I felt it was really important to make sure my kids could play an instrument and it gives me great satisfaction to see how well they play.... So that, that I think I've helped my daughters get interested in music, and they're both, they're 21 and 24 years old, so they're both still playing the cello. My other daughter, she went to University in Europe for a year. She took the cello, she played in that same orchestra actually. She went to the east coast, she took her cello. She's still taking her cello with her. So that, to me, is very

satisfying... Yeah, yeah, and I suppose that's maybe mental health. That anytime you get some kind of satisfaction, that's health mentally I guess.

Carter's journey as a trumpet player was the direct result of his parents' efforts to run a community band. However, he credited his father specifically:

My dad, he was really a big band guy. He grew up in the Glen Miller, Benny Goodman and Tommy Dorsey, those guys, Louis Armstrong, he always enjoyed that. He had a really great record collection so I think that he was probably more of the impetus to get me into doing that. So I mean, that's kind of where it started. So, we were certainly exposed to music growing up.... Sunday afternoon he'd, that was back when you'd stack the records on the changer, and so he'd be reading or doing stuff in the living room or whatever and there'd be music. You wouldn't have to sit in there and listen to it but it was always around.

Recently, a relative came to visit and Carter and his wife pulled out some old family photo albums. He found a special memory of his childhood in an album made by his mother:

We pulled out some old photo albums and there was one that Mom had made for me with pictures of me, and whatever. And one of them was when I was probably ten or eleven years old in my band uniform and that was back in the days when the uniform was military style with the peaked caps and the epaulets, the lanyards and the brass buttons and that sort of thing. So, I mean when you're a little kid and you get to dress up in a uniform like that, that's pretty special.

For Roger and his wife, music has provided the opportunity for many shared experiences over the years:

And my wife comes to the concerts you know and she's heard me play "Happy Wanderer" probably about fifty or sixty times. But you know she comes every time. She comes along on the float on Saturday and she, her and another lady's mother, they sit up on the corner of the float and they throw candy to the kids. She's been doing that for a long time. And, ah, very rarely do I go to a concert that she doesn't come along.

Roger's family is well aware of how much making music means to him:

I tell my wife and my daughters when it comes time to write up my obituary, forget about the work I did, you know I spent thirty years with the government. Forget about it, it doesn't really count. This is way better.

Performance: Extending Self

Music is a performing art. Conductor Eugene Migliaro Corporon described the act of performing music as transformational in its power to connect the conductor to another person:

We [conductors] want to experience the music not just perform it. We want to be connected to one another as the music unfolds, making the vision and the intent of the composer clear...Our purpose should be to take what we have made right and turn it into something significant and feelingful. A great performance is one that uses uncompromising craft to create inspirational soul-to-soul music making (Corporon, 1997, p. 18).

In wind band, performance can have several definitions. Musicians perform for one another in a rehearsal setting but there is a distinction between being heard by fellow band members and by an audience. Performing for an audience raises the risk-to-reward ratio; is a unique challenge and experience; and is the place where all the work of rehearsal resonates outward to connect with people who are listening in real time. Although participants were not asked specifically about

performance by the interviewer, all mentioned performance as part of their experience of health while playing music. For them, elements of challenge, a sense of accomplishment, and the opportunity to connect with others in a positive way were all beneficial outcomes of performance.

Challenge and accomplishment. Music has provided an ever-unfolding opportunity for challenge for Peter:

Even the best I've ever played anything has never been perfect. And I don't know if I will ever achieve perfection on a piece of music. But you keep trying, or more to the point you keep trying stuff that's more difficult. You can play that piece perfectly so let's find something else you play less perfectly and consider that to be satisfying. What is wrong with us? You may find through your study that we are all crazy!

While he joked about this appetite for challenge as a flaw, seizing opportunities has been part of Peter's personal philosophy on embracing life. He noted that "seizing the opportunity and that's a lot of it is not self-limiting. Seizing opportunities and it's a quotation that is attributed to Henry Ford, 'Whether you think you can or you can't, you're right.'" As both a child and as an adult participating in band, music has provided many opportunities for Peter to challenge himself:

I'm terrified of soloing as I mentioned. I said to the director, I need to take a solo. He said why and I said, "Because I'm terrified of soloing." I need to deal with that. I need to overcome my reticence about soloing and get out there.

Roger valued the challenge that playing his instrument in a band has offered him for "brain work:"

Like you see the notes on the page, you see the marks on the page, your brain has to translate that, your brain has to tell your hands and mouth what to do so that puff of air

arrives at those valves right when they're supposed to be. So that requires a lot of brain work and coordination. And, ah, you know, we get new music all the time so you gotta learn, you gotta be able to look at a strange page and you have to be able to do it with that strange page.

His journey to becoming a tuba player began with a challenge from his conductor to change instruments. With key support from musicians he respected, Roger accepted the challenge and his musical world grew. The musicians were, "really very encouraging, very helpful. And it was just sort of like another waking experience [to discover the tuba]." The specific skills required by this instrument added complexity that Roger perceived as beneficial on multiple levels:

So I have to transpose it as I go. And that's another bit of work for the brain, and that's wonderful! And I feel really good about being able to do it, so that's a sense of achievement, and accomplishment, and confidence, when I do that, and it just makes me feel good about things to do it that way, you know that's mental, spiritual, whatever you want to call it and I have a very, a very, ah, personally building experience.

Even his greatest current challenge – playing in jazz band – is welcomed as enjoyable. Roger described this as "it's just this sort of a continuing challenge, and ah, so much fun too."

Charles described the challenge of performance as fulfilling. For him, rising to the challenge required "total concentration" and mental preparation. Using a particular piece of music to illustrate a time when the ensemble met the challenge of the music, Roger described a peak experience:

I listen to, like a Fauré Requiem, and you just hear the chords, and I listen to it when we are playing it in brass band in a concert and it's like, "Ah man, we really did that piece

great,” you know? “We did it as good as we’ve ever done it before, or better.” Those are the kinds of things that excite me about playing music. It’s a challenge.

Carter found the challenge of playing in a wind band to have significant benefits to his health and well-being. The act of playing provided several cognitive benefits:

Well you know I think it keeps your mind active because you’re brain has to be working to perform the signals from the notes to the processor back out to the fingers, and your mouth, and your breathing apparatus, and all that good of stuff. So I’m sure that’s probably a good thing.

These challenges appealed to his interests. As Carter noted,

You know I look at it that way. I’m an engineer so I always like knowing how things work, you know? You have to visualize it and then you have to turn that visual thing into music, sound and music.

In concert performances, he described an increased level of attention resulting from the presence of an audience. As he described it, “I think that at a concert you’re a little more, your sense of attention is at a higher level and you want to make sure you try to do the best job that you can, sound the best.” Carter also described his memory as improved as a result of playing in a band.

As an adult band member he was struck by an experience travelling to a national music festival:

You know I’d never been in anything. The band festival in a nearby town when I was a kid probably was the biggest thing I’d done to date, but you know going out-of-province and performing in something like that. So as far as well-being I think it was a sense of accomplishment and I think that would be the most, the sense of accomplishment in doing something like that.

As a youth, Steven experienced a particularly powerful performance that increased his coping skills. This performance involved the significant challenge of sight-reading a piece of music in front of an audience. The high level of risk involved made for a particularly vivid memory when the group he was with, “nailed it. We just Bang!” The feeling of accomplishment after meeting such a challenge, when combined with the audience reaction, has stayed with Steven at other difficult times in his life. As he described it:

So that was a feeling that I’ll remember. So you think about that, so you go, when you get into a tough situation at work, or at home, or whenever. You start thinking, this isn’t that tough. I can do this. And so it just helps you. Helps you get through that. But it was just a great experience. And I will always remember that. Don’t remember the name of the piece. Probably never heard the name again, but ah, it was just, and the crowd just did this [wow expression].

When asked to elaborate about the benefits of playing in an ensemble with those who have more skill, Steven’s engagement was physically evident:

Interviewer: Steven I’m watching your body language as you’re talking about that challenge piece.

Steven: Yeah, yeah,

Interviewer: Like you’re smiling, your eyes are sparkling, like I can tell that that’s a good feeling for you.

Steven: Yeah! And it did feel good, when you're playing, finishing a concert and actually hitting the notes when you're supposed to hit the notes and doing all that, it's really a good a feeling.

After Steven's marriage broke up, his experience after a year end performance was recalled as a moment of important personal achievement:

And then the concert ...personally, "Ok, I'm playing as well as I've played." And I'm not as fast, 'cause you know, little arthritis in my fingers and stuff like that. But, the intonation, the catching the off-beats, and playing, hitting the notes, I think that that's as well as I've played. And I think that the band played really well too. So it was a really, it wasn't quite that jazz band experience I told you about but it was still, "yeah". So I thought, "Ok, I'm comfortable with how I played." It was kind of a two-year sort of arrival.

For him, this sense of arrival was affirming. He described giving himself "a little bit of a nod and a pat" of self-congratulation. Steven also described himself as benefitting from the multi-faceted challenge of playing music:

I think I'm smarter, because that piece of your brain that you have to use when you are playing and when you are playing with other people you don't, there's not a lot of experiences in the world that we live in, that really match that. That, you know, you have to listen, you have to play, you have to count, you have to watch, you have to read, all within a millisecond.

Even when the end result had mistakes, he found benefit in the process because of the elevated challenge inherent in performing:

Performance is sort of a culmination of a whole bunch of work, and when it goes well it feels really good. You know and it goes badly sometimes and you kind of, you know, not quite as euphoric, or not quite the rush, you still get the adrenalin because of course when things have gone off the rails your body has to work really hard to try and pull it back together, but you know you eventually get it. But when it goes well it really feels good.

Performance is an opportunity for challenge, skill, concentration and expression that occurs in real time. Participants in this study connected this summative experience as a growth experience that positively impacted their health and well-being.

Connecting with others. A key aspect of performance is that it necessitates an audience. The experience of playing music in a band for other people was discussed by participants in this study as impacting their health and well-being. Peter noted, “It really doesn’t matter how it’s generated but listen to the effect that music has on people and how you can impact people through music.” Impacting others through his music has given Peter a sense of personal reward:

I didn’t spend a lot of time looking out at the audience but I did look up a couple of times and could see a whole bunch of toes tapping, stuff like that and I thought, “Wow! We can make people happy! We can engage people in music!...And something my wife told me after we came off stage, “people got up and were dancing to your music.” What more can you ask for?

Roger also drew benefit from performing for others. As he described it, “I loved playing in front of an audience... that is the best part of it all, is to play for people.” He took pleasure in giving people joy and in the positive feedback they gave to him as the musician:

I like playing for the audiences because people enjoy it so much. And the feedback is so good; they say “Oh you guys! Loved that music!” And you go to these small town

parades and they all cheer, and come around and speak to us afterwards and ah, that happens all the time.

His passion for playing for others has led him to volunteer for the Salvation Army Christmas Kettle Campaign where he takes his instrument and plays carols:

And people come by and they say, ‘What’s that?’ Some of them, some of them see it and say, “Oh hey! A euphonium! I used play one of those back in [my town’s] band back in the thirties.” And some people come along and they say, “Do you mind if I sing with you?” and so there’s one lady came by and she sang three or four carols you know and I played on the euphonium and she sang, and a couple of my band boys came by and we played trio’s. And, ah, oh just lots of really good feedback.

Roger’s music has provided a point of connection not just for himself, but also for members of the community at large that are drawn in by his performance. In this way he described performance as a non-verbal form of communication, “So, so music is great, it’s wonderful. It’s a way of communicating, the words don’t matter!”

Carter noted that, “It’s always nice to have someone to come and listen to you. You kind of get a bit of enjoyment out of that. Hope to make somebody’s day.” He would like to see more live instrumental music performed at funerals because of the person-to-person element of live performance:

Carter: It would be nice to see a little more instrumental music like ours at a funerals and things like that. I wouldn’t mind if when I’m on my way out if my wife organizes, finds somebody that would want to do that. Two or three guys or whatever...

Interviewer: So are you talking specifically about the difference of having something played like on a CD? Do you want to talk a little bit about that? What is it in live music that happens that's different?

Carter: Well it's the actual person. Somebody is actually doing it for you and you're performing for a crowd or a group. It's a personal thing; it's a personal touch. There's a human being there you know?...Maybe it's not perfect, you know, just like the rest of us, you make a mistake. But we're all human.

Summary

Five men between the ages of 58 and 76 engaged in semi-structured interviews to generate data that provided insight into how playing in a wind band affected their health and well-being. Using key elements of ensemble playing (i.e., Instrumentation, Sound, and Performing) to organize analysis of the data, numerous themes were identified and documented. The first theme, set around Instrumentation: Defining Roles, included a sense of purpose. Under Sound: Making Meaning, three subthemes were identified: tone, balance and blend. "Tone" included themes of physical and emotional well-being; "balance" encompassed themes of coping and the here and now as well as fun; and "blend" included gestalt in ensemble sound, positive social aspects, and connection to family. Finally, Performance: Extending Self included themes of challenge and accomplishment and connecting with others. To conclude this section, it is worth considering the challenge that Peter issued in his interview:

Come to one of our concerts and if you sit down at one of our concerts wait till the adults get on stage and look at them when they're playing. You will not see a sad face, you will not see somebody distracted, you will see somebody that's fully engaged in the process

and you do a survey and you're going to find doctors, you're going to find lawyers, laborers, people from all walks of life, from all backgrounds, from all faiths, all age groups. What binds them together is performing music and that is something that has the same life expectancy as the players.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study and integrates them with existing literature. The chapter then concludes with a discussion of the strengths and limitations of the study and implications for future research and practice.

Summary of Findings

This basic interpretive qualitative study was conducted using semi-structured interviews with five men between the ages of 58 and 76. Findings provided insight into how playing in a wind band over a life span affects the health and well-being of these older adults. Despite the diversity of their backgrounds and work and family lives, participants perceived many similar benefits to their health and well-being as a result of playing in a wind band. These benefits included a sense of purpose, physical and emotional well-being, coping and the here-and-now, fun, connection to others (e.g., gestalt in ensemble sound, positive social aspects and connection to family), and challenge and accomplishment. Sense of purpose was connected to the unique musical role provided by playing an instrument in an ensemble setting and the opportunities it generated (e.g., mentoring youth, being needed, building confidence, providing a goal and motivation, and giving structure to the week). Physical well-being was experienced through the act of creating tone (e.g., breath, posture, strength, state of alertness) and through motor control (e.g., joints, coordination). One way participants experienced emotional well-being was by connecting to the characteristic sound of their instrument and through the act of creating that sound (e.g., tone, emotional connection through playing). Other aspects of emotional well-being described by participants included increased coping skills (e.g., being in the here-and-now, release of stress, opportunity to focus on music and not stressors), experiencing fun, being part of a whole greater than the sum of its parts (e.g., ensemble music making, moving beyond limits,

supporting others), positive social aspects (e.g., multi-age groups, mentoring, camaraderie, shared challenge, safe social interaction) and connection to family (e.g., parent to child, spousal support). Through performance participants also experienced health and well-being. They experienced challenge and a sense of accomplishment (e.g., cognitive challenge, peak experience, challenge to keep up with musicians of greater skill, feeling a performance was successful) and through connecting with others (e.g., audience impact, giving pleasure to others, receiving positive feedback).

Integration of Results with Existing Literature

The results of the current study expand knowledge about the benefits of playing in a wind band for the health and well-being of older adults. The following section explores the commonalities of the findings of this current study with existing literature in the areas of healthy aging, social determinants of health, ensemble music making for older adults, and music making as a health promoting activity.

Healthy aging. As the largest cohort of seniors in history begins to turn 65, healthy aging is finding its place at the forefront of public discourse on health. In Canada, healthy aging refers to “optimizing opportunities for physical, social and mental health” (Butler-Jones, 2010). The WHO (2005) suggested that a focus on healthy aging should be a key aim of government policy by encouraging healthy habits, physical activity, and social connectedness. Clift et al. (2010) and Gick (2011) looked at health and well-being in group singing and identified three areas of impact: psychological, social, and physical. As was previously discussed, participants in the current study also reported health benefits in these three areas as a result of playing in band. Their experiences included physical and emotional well-being, coping and the here-and-now, fun, gestalt in ensemble sound, positive social aspects, challenge and accomplishment, and

connection to family and others. What is unique about this current study was the specific role that playing in wind band had as the medium through which to experience these indicators of healthy aging.

Internationally, the WHO (2002) has used the term “active aging” and broadened the discussion of healthy aging. Active aging further defined a healthy aging approach as one that moves beyond the experience of seniors to also includes an understanding of how experiences earlier in the life course create conditions to influence the health and quality of life as individuals age. This life course perspective is also part of the Public Health Agency of Canada’s framework for conceptualizing healthy aging (Butler-Jones, 2010, Aging and Lifecourse section, para. 2).

All study participants had a connection to music from childhood. While Roger did not begin playing a wind instrument in a band until his 50s, he did begin listening to bands play at a very young age. Throughout his life Roger also played piano as part of musical ensembles in his school, community and church. Steven and Peter both talked about their parents’ record collections and their early life experiences listening to the big band music of the day. Peter felt this early influence connected him to the brass instrument he went on to play as an adult. Roger, Carter, and Steven mentioned that their parents made it a priority that their children have music education. It is interesting to note that Peter, Roger, Carter, and Steven grew up in rural settings where, presumably, a music education would have been more challenging to provide than for Charles, who grew up in a city. Indeed, Carter’s parents were part of a group of parents that founded and ran a community band to make the opportunity possible for children in their small town. A common thread through all of the participants’ childhood music experiences was a parent or parents who felt music was an important part of their child’s life. In this way, parent

interest, support, and involvement played a role in creating the conditions for the participants' future involvement in the health promoting activity of playing in a band.

Music making as a health promoting activity. Social connectedness and sense of purpose have been associated with healthy aging, and they may be key elements in understanding music making as a health promoting activity.

Social connectedness. Social connectedness is identified as a key area impacting healthy aging (Betts Adams et al., 2011; Butler-Jones, 2010; Gilmour, 2012; Hays & Minichiello, 2005; Public Health Agency of Canada, 2011; Shields & Martel, 2006) and its impact on health appears to function in multiple ways. Gilmour (2012) noted that greater social participation was positively associated with self-perceived health and negatively associated with loneliness and life dissatisfaction. Betts Adams et al. (2011) noted that the psychological effects of social connectedness include feelings of self-efficacy, a sense of purpose, and better mental health. Participants in this study reported social connectedness resulting from playing in band in numerous ways, including camaraderie within the group; connection with family who support their involvement; connection to community through performance; mentorship; music as a vehicle for connection with others; and specifically through the experience of becoming part of the whole sound of an ensemble.

Coffman and Adamek (1999) and Solé et al. (2010) identified social interaction, a sense of personal well-being and accomplishment, and enriching recreational activities as factors that increased a sense of well-being for older adults involved in music making activities. Participants in both studies ranked social interaction as the primary reason for joining a music activity. The secondary reason identified was related to either learning more about music (Solé et al., 2010) or to actively making music (Coffman & Adamek, 1999). The current study also found social

interaction to be the most common theme, but the findings go on to extend previous literature around social interaction in two ways.

First, Peter, Charles, and Carter included the concept of safe social distance in their description of the social benefits of playing in a wind band. For them, making music in an ensemble provided a sense of being connected to others without some of the barriers in social settings, like the ability to make conversation and feeling pressured to share personal information. Playing in an ensemble can be a non-intimidating way to make social connections.

Second, there was a common sense that the whole was greater than the sum of its parts; this, in turn, provided emotional benefit to the five study participants. This gestalt was experienced while making music in a an ensemble setting, as the individual's sound blended with that of the players around them to create an ensemble sound beyond that of their individual sound. This experience is unique to performing music in an ensemble setting.

Sense of purpose in older adults. Life course changes related to aging (e.g., retirement) can prompt a reconceptualization of self. Previously existing social circles, daily roles and routines, and general sense of purpose can fall away when older adults move out of the work world (Dabback, 2008, 2010; Hallam et al., 2012). Participants in the current study noted that playing in a wind band provided them with a sense of purpose, both in fulfilling their role in an ensemble and by providing a challenge requiring practice outside of the rehearsal setting. Rehearsals and practicing also served as motivating factors to get participants up out of their chairs and their homes. Roger and Peter both made mention of the specific importance their choice of instrument has to their ensembles as a whole. Musical role provided a sense of purpose to their experience playing an instrument and added a personal sense responsibility to others in the ensemble.

Along with a sense of purpose is the concept of growth through lifelong learning and the motivational aspect of challenging oneself. Numerous studies have referenced cognitive challenge as a benefit to health and well-being in older adults (e.g., Chappell, 2011; Clift et al., 2010; Coffman, 2008; Creech et al. 2013; Gick, 2011; Jenkins, 2011). Participants in the current study reported that playing in a wind band offers the opportunity to experience challenge on multiple levels, including individual musicianship, ensemble skill, and elements of performance. In his book, *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990) described the flow channel created during an activity when the level of challenge sits on the outer edge of an individual's skill level. In his studies he found that every flow activity,

...provided a sense of discovery, a creative feeling of transporting the person into a new reality. It pushed the person to higher levels of performance, and led to previously undreamed-of states of consciousness. In short, it transformed the self by making it more complex. In this growth of the self lies the key to flow activities (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 74).

Playing in a wind band provides a setting for an optimal experience of flow. For participants in this study, this flow experience was described as beneficial to their health and well-being. As Peter described, "I can just get lost in the music and focus on that, and take a break from reality, expose myself to a different reality, however you want to look at it."

Social determinants of health. Social determinants of health are socio-economic factors that cause, impact, or influence health outcomes (Butler-Jones, 2010). The WHO (2013) indicated these are the circumstances in which people are born, live, work, play, interact, and age. While these determinants affect people throughout the life course, the cumulative effect is more apparent as people age (Butler-Jones, 2010). The socio-economic gap between people is

illuminated by those who receive prevention and health promotion services and those who do not (Chappell, 2011).

Research on older adults who participate in music making activities has identified a divide with respect to social economic status (Coffman, 2008; Hallam et al., 2012). Demographic characteristics of participants indicated predominantly Caucasian, and from professional backgrounds whose childhoods included some music making activities. The participants in the present study also mirror this general demographic profile. Four of five held a post-secondary degree. While there was a range of incomes represented in the sample, four of the five indicated a rural upbringing where participation in music as a child was a significant effort on the part of their parents, both financially and in the commitment required to make the opportunity possible.

Livesay et al. (2012) surveyed choir members across Canada and reported no difference in the frequency of response items across socio-economic and well-being categories. While the small sample size of the current study limits generalization to the larger populace, it is worth noting that differences between the samples may be related to the equipment and rehearsal requirements necessary for a band versus a choir. Indeed, four of the five participants in the current study spoke about seeking out and purchasing instruments as part of their journey to connecting with adult band later in life. While having access to an instrument is a potential barrier to participation, locating an instrument is also an opportunity for connecting with a larger musical community.

Other potential barriers. Gilmour (2012) noted that potential barriers such as health limitations, limited time, as well as personal and family responsibilities may inhibit older adults' ability to participate in social activities. Hallam et al. (2012) discussed structural, informational, social, and personal and dispositional barriers that interfere with seniors' involvement in active

music making activities. In the current study, participant Roger noted specific physical challenges related to choosing to play the tuba. These included both the strength he needed to play the instrument and to physically transport the instrument from home to a rehearsal room full of stairs.

Roger also mentioned that performing music seemed to break down some of the dispositional barriers experienced when living in a retirement community. He noted, “There’s some people there that, ah you know they complain about everything like that. They said, “Oh! This is wonderful....Yeah, music is a great healer of many things.” Peter and Roger both talked about the challenge of finding an instrument. Rather than experiencing this as a boundary, both men described it as a source of enjoyment and as an opportunity to connect with a wide variety of people who share interest in their instrument.

Strengths and Limitation of the Current Study

The main strength of this study is that it explored an area not found in research literature to date. The use of a basic qualitative design to seek rich description of the participants’ experiences playing in wind band as a health promoting activity is an addition to previous quantitative literature (Coffman 2002, 2007, 2008; Coffman & Adamek, 1999) and research that used rating scales in a mixed methods approach (Creech et al., 2013). This qualitative study focused on the experiences of participants in their own words. Their descriptions add depth to the current understanding of how playing in a wind band is beneficial to the health and well-being of older adults.

In addition, my background as wind ensemble conductor, musician, and music educator helped the research in several ways. First, it helped in establishing rapport with the participants and a common language from which to explore their musical experiences. Second, my

experience and passion for ensemble playing grounded exploration of the research questions through the semi-structured interview process. One outcome that this depth of specialized knowledge influenced was exploration of the participants' experience of blend in an ensemble. This exploration led to the theme of gestalt in ensemble sound. Finally, my background as a fellow musician with similar experiences aided in collecting and analyzing data grounded in the musical experience of wind band.

The male cohort that comprised the sample was an unanticipated strength of the study. While recruiting male participants was not the specific intention of the study, the resulting sample demographic provided an additional focus to the study (i.e., the experiences of older adult males playing in a wind band).

There are several limitations to this study. The small size and gender specificity of the sample limit understanding the research in light of a broader population. A narrowing of sample characteristics is also reflected in race, general education level, and income bracket. All participants were Caucasian, male, graduated from high school, and had incomes that ranged from \$40,000 - \$49,000 to \$150 000 +. These same limitations invite interesting questions for future research.

Implications for Future Research

As mentioned above, the narrowed demographics of the study's participants raise the possibility of exploring the health benefits of playing in a wind ensemble for other older adult musicians (e.g., women, people from other cultural and socio-economic backgrounds).

It would be beneficial to investigate the experiences of older adult musicians who are starting to play in a wind band for the first time to see how their experiences might be different

and/or similar from those of older adults who have been involved in music across their life course.

The idea of social connection from a safe social distance as beneficial for older adults may be worth exploring. Future research could explore gender-specific differences in social connection. Another avenue to investigate would be if this form of connection to other people, without the pressure of conversation and personal sharing, is common to other group activities. Further to that, if similar activities exist, research could explore their impact on health and well-being.

Group music making is common across cultures. Future research could explore aspects of healthy aging for individuals participating in other forms of group music making (e.g., drumming, chanting, string orchestras, fiddle groups).

Implications for Practice

The study's findings suggest some implications for helping professionals such as teachers, counselors, psychologists, people working in health service delivery to older adults, and parents.

The life course perspective of this study suggests that music activity as a child can act as a bridge to making music as an older adult. Music educators who work with children are often called upon to advocate for the importance of music in schools and communities. The idea that childhood involvement in music may have a connection to healthy aging across the lifespan gives a longitudinal perspective to music advocacy and its importance. For parents, this same information can encourage their active support of music making as an activity for children with long-term benefits.

Counsellors, psychologists, and other health professionals who work with older adults may benefit from being aware of adult band opportunities available in their communities as a possible recommendation for older adults. By connecting clients to resources such as this professionals provide opportunities for engagement in activities with potential health benefits across physical, emotional, cognitive, and social domains.

Conclusion

Butler-Jones' (2010) report on healthy aging in Canada challenged researchers to build on existing initiatives and strategies that impact the health of seniors and that could impact the health of all Canadians earlier in their life course, thereby impacting the health of seniors in the future. The report identified two areas for action to create the conditions for healthy aging: (a) improving data and increasing knowledge of seniors' health, and (b) building and sustaining healthy and supportive environments. This study addressed both identified areas by exploring the health and well-being benefits to older adults that play in wind bands. These benefits are wide-reaching and impact the physical, emotional, cognitive, and social well-being of older adults through the specific medium of playing a wind instrument in an ensemble setting.

A Little More About Me

I have been moved by this research and by the stories that were shared with me. This study has affirmed for me the importance of music making as a true gift for young people that can have a life-long impact on their health and well-being. Finally, I will never listen to an adult band in the same way again. Whereas I first used to analyze their music making with the ears of a conductor, from now on I will first forever listen to their music as the sound of a collective life experience that takes my breath away. "Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life" (Auerbach, n.d.).

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Appendix A: Advertisement for Posting

Health in the Winds

**DO YOU CURRENTLY PLAY A WOODWIND OR BRASS INSTRUMENT IN A WIND BAND?
HAS THIS BEEN IMPORTANT TO YOUR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OVER THE COURSE OF
YOUR LIFE?**

ARE YOU 55 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER?

IF SO, WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU

Please consider contributing to a research project that explores
reflections of older adult wind players playing in a wind band as a health promoting activity.
The purpose of the study is to further understanding about the therapeutic benefits of playing
a wind instrument in an ensemble setting.

Participation involves a 60-90 minute conversational interview that is audio-recorded and transcribed.
Information you provide will be treated confidentially and your anonymity will be protected. Participation is
completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time.

If you would like to participate or find out more about the study,

please contact me at:

jdm579@mail.usask.ca

Thank you!

Jennifer McAllister

B.Mus., M.M., B.Ed.

Graduate Student in School and Counselling Psychology

Supervisor: Dr. Jennifer A.J. Nicol

Accredited Music Therapist, Registered Doctoral Psychologist, Associate Professor, University of
Saskatchewan

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural and Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region Research Ethics Boards
approved the study on June 17, 2014.

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Following an orientation in which the purpose and anticipated format of the interview is introduced, all participants will be asked the same first question:

- Please tell me about how playing in a wind band has been part of your life
- Thinking further about this, please tell me about how playing in a wind band is part of your life right now and how this relates to your health and well-being.

Possible further questions will be responsive to each participant's story and informed by the following examples of questions:

- Take a moment to think of any strong memories you have of playing in band that influenced your health and well-being. Please choose one and tell me about it, describing it so that I can experience it as though I was there myself: e.g., how the experience started, what you did, how you felt, what you saw, what you heard and so on
- If health and well-being elements emerge in the anecdote, participants will be asked to elaborate on these aspects of the experience. E.g., how do you link playing with that health benefit? What kind of well-being do you mean? what part of the playing experience was important to this health benefit? Have you had other similar kinds of playing experiences
- If health and well-being elements are not immediately apparent in the anecdote, then a direct question will be asked: e.g., does playing in band ever make you feel healthy? more well?please tell me about that

Appendix C: Demographic Form

Date _____ Code No. _____

A. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Age _____ Years Gender _____

Relationship Status:

Married or Common-Law _____ Divorced _____ Widowed _____ Single _____ Other _____

Living Arrangements (Who lives with you?) _____

Ethnicity/Culture: Canadian _____ German _____ English _____ Scottish _____

Irish _____ Ukrainian _____ French _____ First Nations _____

Norwegian _____ Polish _____ Metis _____ Dutch _____

Russian _____ Swedish _____ Other _____

What is your highest level of education?

Elementary school _____

High school _____

College _____

Graduate School _____

What is your degree level?

High school diploma _____

Bachelor's Degree _____

Masters _____

PhD _____

None _____

Occupation or Previous occupation _____

Employment status?

Full-time employed _____

Part-time employed _____

Self-employed _____

Housewife/husband _____

Unemployed _____

Retired _____

Current Family Income	_____ less than \$10,000	_____ \$10,000-19, 000
	_____ \$20,000- 29,000	_____ \$30,000- 39,000
	_____ \$40,000- 49,000	_____ \$50,000-59,000
	_____ \$60,000-69,000	_____ \$70,000+
	_____ \$100,000 +	_____ \$150,000+

B. MUSIC BACKGROUND

Musical training

a) I have formal training in music _____ Yes _____ No

b) I had music lessons in high school _____ Yes _____ No

c) I studied music in college _____ Yes _____ No

d) I had music lessons outside of school _____ Yes _____ No

Musical Instruments

- a) I can play a musical instrument? ____ Yes ____ No
- b) My primary instrument is _____
- c) I started playing the instrument at _____ years of age
- d) I have played my primary instrument for _____ years
- e) I had _____ years of formal training/ informal training
- f) I was taught at ____ school ____ privately / ____ I taught myself

Band

- a) Have you participated in a band? ____ Yes ____ No
- b) If yes, how many different bands? _____
 - i) I started playing in a band at ____ years of age.
 - ii) how many years have you participated in bands? ____ years
- c) Have you taken any lessons on a wind instrument? ____ Yes ____ No
- d) How many years of formal / informal instrumental training have you had? ____ years.
- e) What style(s) of music have you performed? _____

Appendix D: Consent Form

Study Title: *Health in the Winds: The Experience of Playing in a Wind Band as a Health Promoting Activity for Older Adults*

Student Researcher: Jennifer McAllister, Graduate Student, School and Counselling Psychology, University of Saskatchewan (email: jdm579@mail.usask.ca).

Supervisory: Dr. Jennifer J. Nicol, Assistant Professor, Educational Psychology and Special Education, University of Saskatchewan (email: jennifer.nicol@usask.ca; phone: 1-306-966-5261)

Purpose and Procedure: This research study explores the experiences and perceptions of playing in a wind band as a health promoting activity for older adult wind players. The study will investigate the following question: What perceived health benefits and challenges have older adult wind players experienced based on their participation and involvement in playing in a wind band?

You will be interviewed once at a pre-determined mutually convenient time and place. Your interview will last about 30-60 minutes, and will be audio-taped and transcribed. The transcribed interview will be used to generate a summary and a list of quotes that may be used in verbal and written presentations of the research. You will receive a copy of the transcript summary and be asked to read and respond to the material's accuracy. Corrections and changes can be made to increase confidentiality and anonymity. A data/transcript release

form will be signed once you review and approve the transcript summary. You will also be asked to complete a brief demographic form.

Should more information be required, you may be contacted for a follow-up interview. This consent form be re-visited at that time should you have any questions or concerns.

Potential Benefits and Risks: Benefits are anticipated in terms of identifying how playing a wind instrument in a wind band is a health promoting activity for participants. The risks associated with participating in this research are minimal. Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any time. You are free to answer or not answer a question, as well as free to turn off the audio-recorder should you wish. Coding and altering any personally identifying information will be used to maximize confidentiality and the provision of privacy. In the unlikely event that participating in the study leaves you feeling upset and in need of further support, appropriate follow-up will be provided in consultation with graduate supervisor, Dr. Jennifer Nicol, who is a registered doctoral psychologist.

Storage of Data: In order to protect the confidentiality and privacy of participants, all information obtained during the study will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. Following completion of the study, data will be kept by Dr. Jennifer Nicol, supervising faculty member, for a minimum of 5-years in a locked filing cabinet in her office, and then destroyed. If the researcher chooses to destroy the data after the five years, it will be destroyed beyond recovery to preserve participant confidentiality and privacy.

Confidentiality: Participant and third party privacy (confidentiality and anonymity) will be protected by: (a) using a locked filing cabinet to store all relevant information during the course of the research; (b) using a coding system to keep participant names and contact information separate from data collected during the research and this data link will be

destroyed upon completion of data collection; (c) altering potentially identifying information; and (d) giving participants the opportunity to review the final transcript and summary, and sign a data release form authorizing its use in future presentations and publications. The data from this study will be published and may be presented at conferences; however, your identity will be kept confidential. Although direct quotations from the interview will be reported, you will be given a pseudonym, and all identifying information (e.g., age, occupation) will be removed from the report.

Follow Up: If you would like to obtain the results from this study, please indicate your interest by checking Yes on the line at the bottom of this form.

Right to Withdraw: You may withdraw from the research for any reason, at any time, without penalty. If you choose to withdraw from the study, any data contributed by you will be destroyed. You are also free to not answer individual questions and to stop the audio-recorder should you wish. Your right to withdraw data from the study will apply until the interview data has been pooled. After this it is possible that some form of research dissemination will have already occurred and it may not be possible to withdraw your data.

Questions: If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to ask. Should any questions arise in the future, you may contact me, my supervisor (Dr. Jennifer Nicol) using the contact information at the top of this form.

This research project was reviewed and approved on ethical grounds through a harmonized review process by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural and Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region Research Ethics Boards. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the U of S Research Ethics Office ethics.office@usask.ca or (306) 966-2975. Out of town participants may call toll-free at 1-

888-966-2975. The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural and Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region Research Ethics Boards approved the study on June 17, 2014.

Consent to Participate: I have read and understood the description provided above. I have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered satisfactorily. My signature below confirms that I consent to participate in the study described above, understanding that I may withdraw this consent at any time. A copy of this consent form has been given to me for my records.

Signature of Participant

Date

study
Signature of Student Researcher

☐ Yes, I would to see the results of this

Appendix E: Data Release

I, _____, have reviewed the transcript and transcript summary of my personal interview in this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter, and delete information from the transcript summary as appropriate. I acknowledge that the documents accurately reflect what I said in my personal interview with [name of the researcher]. I hereby authorize the release of the transcript to [name of the researcher] to be used in the manner described in the consent form. I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript Release Form for my own records.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature of Participant

Signature of Researcher